The Secrets of
Resident Evil 2
Pg. 54

Game Informer
MAGAZ

YOSHI'S STORY

The Tale of the Tongue

PLUS:

X-Men Vs. Street Fighter · WCW Nitro · Cardinal Syn · Gex: Enter the Gecko
NHL 99 · Need for Speed III · F-Zero X · Fighter's Destiny · Breath of Fire III
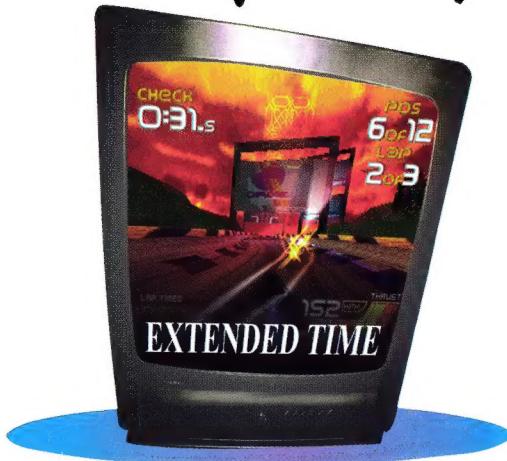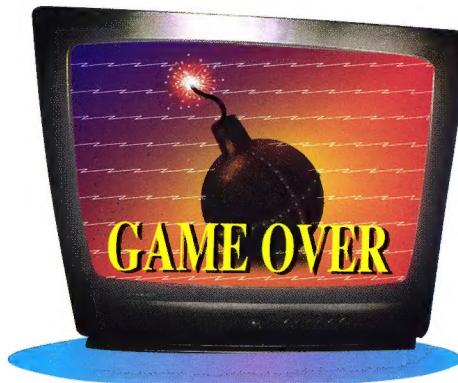
FINAL FANTASY TACTICS

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Over 50 Games Reviewed & Previewed!

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At a Glance

Correction:
In the December '97 issue Game Informer mistakenly switched the names of two envelope art winners; Josh Gilbert and Djimbinou Oleg. Sorry guys.

PCs Are Not The Future Of Gaming

There has been a lot of talk recently about the personal computer taking over the world of gaming. Maybe...maybe too much talk. This song is not a rebel song...this song is...sorry, I got confused there for a second. But the one thing I am certain of, is that this is not going to happen. Not for a long time.

The argument that many PC advocates have been using is that, with the advent of 3D cards like the NEC Power VR and 3Dfx, PCs are more powerful gaming machines. However, there are a number of problems with this argument.

Number one: price. The PC, while a fabulous machine, is very expensive and the technology under the hood is quickly outdated. Oh yeah, and those great 3D graphics cards that everyone keeps touting...well, those cost about the same as a PlayStation or Nintendo 64 (and they don't run games without a computer to put them in).

Number two: we've seen this before. Consoles and PCs have been battling it out for graphic supremacy for decades. One pulls into the lead, but is inevitably leapfrogged by its competitor.

Number three: simplicity. Consoles are just too darn easy to use. Put game in box. Turn box on. Play. PCs, on the other hand, almost demand a degree in computer science to keep them running smoothly. While Windows '95 has cleared up some of these problems, it certainly hasn't fixed them as it is inevitable that at least one or two games will just refuse to work on your system.

So while computers are great, people will always buy game consoles. They're cheap, easy, and more powerful than you think. Although the next wave of high-tech console machines is still a ways off, when they come they will be able to play any type of game a PC can, and they'll be able to do it better.

Reviewers(from left): Reiner, Paul, Bergren, Jon, Andy, Robert

Bergren, The Game Burrito

"Everyone fights, no one quits.' Alien induced mayhem at its finest, Quake II is soooo sweet. There were many other great games in the office this month like X-Men Vs. Street Fighter, FF Tactics, and Blade Runner, but Quake II gets my vote for this month's best game. 'If you have the means, I highly recommend picking one up.'"

Robert, The Game Cassanova

"'Being an editor for a game magazine is not all roses. Reality Check Number One surfaced the other day as I was preparing to go buck wild on some Final Fantasy Tactics... Andy: 'Did I assign that game for you to play?' Me: 'Um, no.' Andy: 'Well, get back to work on Nagano '98' Me: 'But...' Andy: 'No Buts!' *slaps my forehead* Me: 'oww.' But, I must say, the job still rules, and I WILL play Tactics soon. Oh, yes... hehehee. Remember, Brak rules. All hail Brak!"

Jon, The Greedy Gamer

"All I can think about is how insane FF Tactics would have been with cinematics. Traveling to a new castle, getting waylaid in the woods, or approaching a new town, if Square could have done even a few cinematic lead-ins during the game, Tactics would have crossed the line from awesome to mind-blowing. So I was a little tough in my review, but I hold Square to task, and ask that when a game has a chance to be one of the greatest games of all-time, make it so."

Paul, The Game Professor

"I'm still living and breathing Resident Evil 2. I have played it through a couple of times and I'm still very satisfied. Make sure to take a look at the strategy guide for the cool secret to finding the alternate character costumes. Six-shooter Claire is hilarious. Other than games... wait...there is little to do besides play games when the weather is so cold in Minnesota. I'll keep warm inside with the vids close by."

Reiner, The Raging Gamer

"Hey! Who stole my Snickers bar? Hmmm...this bottle of Raccoon City G-Virus looks tasty. Arghh... this stuff tastes horrible...(hack)...(cough)...but wait! I feel stronger...more aggressive! I feel like I could take on the entire world -- without wearing my Superman underwear! Oh no! What's happening to my face? Hmmm... me crave flesh. Andy look tasty, but not enough meat. Ohhh...Storm plump with red goodness. Me be quiet...inch closer...and closer..."

Andy, The Game Hombre

"Another issue bites the dust as Game Informer goes full swing into the post-holiday gaming frenzy. By now you should have Resident Evil 2 and be playing it like mad (as I am doing right now), but after you master that game I highly advise you give Yoshi's or Tactics a whirl...hey, Reiner...stop eating Storm's leg...and Robert, get back to work."

Mono Question of the Month

Readers (and select game publishers, we know who you are): I think it's just wrong that you gave [insert game name here] a [insert score here]. I mean, that game rocks. I've been waiting for a game like that for a while and it came out and it kicks ass. You people must just be really stupid if you didn't like that game. I don't care what you think, you're all just totally wrong about that [game name] review. No excuse is acceptable. You're all a bunch of [insert derogatory name here] if you really thought that game was no good, and you all make me want to [insert vulgar verb here]. I suggest in your next issue you publish a revised and more agreeable review.

GI: You'd be surprised at the number of letters we get just like this. They are usually sent anonymously and always ridicule us for a rating that is "too low." We have even traced (via our Internet navigating prowess) some of the most heinous and vulgar letters to locations suspiciously close to development studios.

Get over it people! We are not going to agree on every single game since the dawn of Pong. Likewise, we are not going to back down and change the score of a game – unless there's a misprint or error, of course. If you don't agree with our score on a particular game do not berate us, just tell us constructively why you don't agree. We play a lot of games and enjoy nothing better than having an intelligent and heated debates about our favorite subject – video games.

Stocks, Bonds, And Games

Hello. I love video games. They're practically my life which, in many ways, is destroying my life. I have no job. I have almost no education. I was thinking about putting some of my money in stocks. Since I love to play video games all the time, I figured I would place some money in video game stocks. I have just one problem: I don't know which companies to put money into. Could you guys help me out? If not, can you at least e-mail me back saying so?

On another, less important note, I want to congratulate you guys on such a great mag both on and off-line. Your on-line mag is so up-to-date and my friends and I come to your site at least once a day. Thanks for all the news.

Greg Daily
earthlink.net

Let us get this straight. You have no job, but you've got the cash to invest in stocks? Have you ever thought about variable annuities? Err...forget about all that because we are not brokers or financial advisors; however, we can tell you that you can find a lot of stock information on the Internet. Several search engines including Yahoo! and Infoseek have stock sections where you can basically type in a company name and it will display detailed stock information. You probably

won't be able to find information on every company (because some are not publicly traded), but there are more than a handful of game publishers that can be researched. We hold off on giving you any investment advice because most of us have trouble just keeping track of our wallets. Thanks for your letter and compliments.

A Cornucopia Of Questions (Numbered Even)

I have a few questions for you.

1. Will you do a Classic GI or a special feature on Game Boy and some of its top games of all-time, including the specs. of Game Boy Pocket, accessories, and future analysis?
2. What was your score for Donkey Kong Land?
3. Is the Barracuda pad for PlayStation better than the Sony Analog Controller?
4. How many people reading this think Chicago deep dish pizza is awesome? I do!!
5. Is it confusing in the GI offices with two Andys and two Pauls?
6. Will you put a picture of the newly remodeled GI offices in your upcoming issue?
7. Have I gone completely BANANAS?!?!

Confusedly,
The Monkey Gamer
interaccess.com

Oooh, numbered questions. Here we go.

1. That sounds like a great idea. We regularly cover Game Boy games in Classic GI and will continue to do so in the future. As for Game Boy and its future, it is really the only hand-held to consider purchasing, as Nintendo continues to fully support it. Check out our Space World '97 feature on page 12 for all that is new for Game Boy.
2. Hmmm...it has been at least a year since any of us have played that so ten billion sounds good.
3. We commonly stick with the standard pad, but choosing the right one usually comes down to personal preferences. See if you can test a controller before purchase.
4. We do too. Jon says he'll eat anything that is cooked. Oh wait, he'll just eat anything.
5. We have come across some interesting episodes, but we have come up with a solution by calling the second Andy, Reiner, and the second Paul, Bergren.

6. We still have to put the finishing touches on our work before we reveal the ultimate gaming office.
7. No, not yet, but we see you already call yourself a monkey.

David Lee Roth Syndrome

Why did Erik "The PC Jedi" leave the magazine staff? Where did he go? Did he try and go solo like David Lee Roth? What happened?

Tom Connelly
frontiercomm.net

Erik Reppen (aka The PC Jedi) left the magazine under mysterious circumstances – he wanted to go back to college. Although he has no aspirations of becoming the next Diamond Dave, Erik is the second staff member to leave us for academia. Vinny Vinyon (aka the Video Vigilante), left to attend graduate school a little over a year ago. (He now has a Masters Degree in bio-statistics by the way.) What forces in gamedom attract the GI staff back to school? It is a mystery indeed.

How Y'All Doin'?

I was wondering why don't y'all make NBA Live 98 for Nintendo 64. Besides, y'all don't have many games. Please make NBA Live 99 on N64 with better graphics than PlayStation. Y'all need more basketball games. Also, y'all need to make more games. I am getting an N64 for Christmas and I wish that there was a Live 98 for N64. Could y'all also make a game like WWF vs. the World and WCW? I am quite sure that would be a big hit for everyone. I know that they have Starfox, Cruisin USA, and more, but I think that it should have more games. I am an eleven year old in the fifth grade.

Unknown

There's no doubt that the N64 is in dire need of a basketball game. Luckily, Konami's NBA In The Zone '98 should be out shortly. You can read about that game in this issue, as well as a report on Nintendo's new NBA basketball game. Concerning NBA Live for N64, we are pretty sure that EA Sports is looking into it, but no official announcement has been made. The mixing of the worlds of WWF and WCW will not likely happen in video games or in real life, for that matter, as they are rivals in more ways than one. By the way, we don't make games – we just play 'em.

Looking For A Game TV

Could you do me a huge favor? I've got a 10 year old TV and this Christmas I'm going to ask for a new one. While I saw the GX TV, it's a bit small! Well, I was wondering if you could suggest one to

get so I can enjoy my copy of Final Fantasy 7, and when Zelda comes out I can enjoy it too? I appreciate it. Hope you reply soon, I'd really be thankful.

Dustin Smith
flash.net

Yes, the GX TV is a little small, but with the list of features and price it's a pretty good bargain. Our resident electronics and home entertainment expert, Andy McNamara, has a basic guideline for any TV that you want to use for video games -- the more video inputs and outputs the better.

There are the obvious differences in picture quality that will have to be compared side-by-side at the store and budget constraints may prevent you from getting a 35-inch, flat-screen mega-TV. Just look in a price range and search for that TV with plenty of inputs and outputs.

New Addition to Reviews

Hey guys, I have an idea. I know you guys get thousands of these a month. Please give me one minute of your time. You guys have some of the best commentary in the game. Your reviews are straightforward and to the point. My idea is this...How about adding REPLAY value into the ratings system?

At first I thought that this would be a small part of "Entertainment," then I took another look. What is one major question most gamers think of before buying a game? After I conquer this game, am I going to want to play it more? I gave this much

thought and decided to drop it by your e-mail. Thanks for the time.

Loyal Gamer for Life,
Mike Samuelson
wcta.net

We will have to think about that addition for a while...OK, done! Thanks to your input (and that of many others) we have decided to add the Replay Value category to our reviews. We decided against giving each of our reviewers free reign by just slapping a number amongst the other categories. What we decided to do is to add another section to the bullet description of each game review. The Replay Value will have five possible entries: High, Moderately High, Average, Moderately Low, and Low. We think the replay value is very subjective, so all the reviewers will come up with a consensus where this category is concerned. While this new category will not affect the Bottom Line score of a game, the reviewers have always taken replay value into consideration when evaluating games.

Mysterious Game Pictures

I've seen advertisements in magazines that show different screen shots of video games that are not in the ones I own (007 for N64 and Quarterback Club 98 for N64). Why is this?

Casey Frid
winona.msus.edu

This is a question that has perplexed mankind for eons...well...at least the last five years or so. We have noticed that strange screen shots often appear in print ads. A company normally plans its advertising far in advance of the actual date you see the ad or the game. Screen images are taken from early versions of the game or even from development computers and some of the initial images don't make the final cut and are destined to be immortalized in these ads. Although some companies enhance and touch up the images to present them in the best possible manner, we don't think they are intentionally trying to mislead you.

FEBRUARY WINNER
ERIN MEHLOS
WATERTOWN, WI

Matt Williams, Conshohocken, PA
A classic confrontation.

Bryan Garza, Cicero, IL
We'd hate to see the size of his litter box!

If Alucard is Dracula backwards, then is he surrounded by erif?

Michael Buono, Rochester, MI
Mmmmmmmm...
Mega Man!

Randi Polillo Franklinville, NJ
Is it a Slig or Slog? You make the call.

Ryan Andrade Fall River, MA
Lui Kang is one bad man!

Wanted: Envelope Art

Enter the Game Informer Envelope Art Contest. All you need to do is draw, paint, scratch, spit or carve the best darn envelope art you can think of and send it to us. Please include your name, phone number, and return address on the back of the envelope. If you're the monthly winner, we'll feature your work in GI and you'll receive a video game prize from the Game Informer vault.

Back to the Basics

YOSHI'S STORY™

Tongue Tied – Reviving a Lost Genre

Yoshi's Story is, obviously, not as revolutionary as Mario 64, and makes little effort to capitalize on the Nintendo 64's ability to produce the best three-dimensional graphics in the industry. As with any other Nintendo platformer, Yoshi is a solid release that emphasizes gameplay over visuals. High-end consoles have (so to speak) brainwashed consumers into believing, "the better the graphics, the better the game." But this time, Nintendo has a different philosophy.

With the Super Mario Brothers franchise as large and successful as it is, Nintendo has the freedom and resources available to mix and match games and characters in different genres. Nintendo's heavyweight platformer, Mario, will always be the character who introduces a new machine or game idea. The other popular characters from this universe, like Yoshi, are the clean-up hitters who fill the gaps, while still presenting the same basic game design and gameplay found in the Mario games.

Mario moved to 3D, and now Yoshi is here to bring back the meat of Nintendo's 2D platformers. Nintendo has tried to coax new gamers into taking notice of this 16-bit reincarnate, by saying it's unique because it's 2 1/2D. However, it's not. Yoshi's Story is identical to the 8 and 16-bit batch of Nintendo platformers, with only a few minor enhancements in the graphics category.

Most may think that Nintendo rushed this title out, and didn't put much into it. Well, those people are wrong. Nintendo's platformers have always had the tightest control and most innovative concepts around, and Yoshi follows suit perfectly. If you've been led into believing your game must have the best 3D graphics around, then you'll miss out on one of the best N64 games to date. Yoshi is the first high-end release to bring back classic platforming, an experience all but lost to a gaming industry infatuated with the powers of 3D. If you found entertainment in Nintendo's Mario, Donkey Kong, or Kirby releases on "the ancient machines," then Yoshi is right up your alley. It's one of the few games that revives the golden age of gaming, an age when gameplay was king.

- **Size:** 96 Megabit
- **Style:** 1-Player Action/Platform
- **Special Features:** 6 Playable Yoshi (With 2 More Hidden); Eggshooting; Intricate Tongue Usage and Control; Tons of Secrets; Traditional Mario Enemies and Environments; Strange Songs; Internal Memory Save; Rumble Pak Compatible
- **Levels:** 24
- **Replay Value:** Average
- **Created by:** Nintendo
- **Available:** March 9 for Nintendo 64

▶ THE BOTTOM LINE **8.5**

Be sure to stock up at the egg stations.

You found all the Yoshi!

That eggshot is right on target.
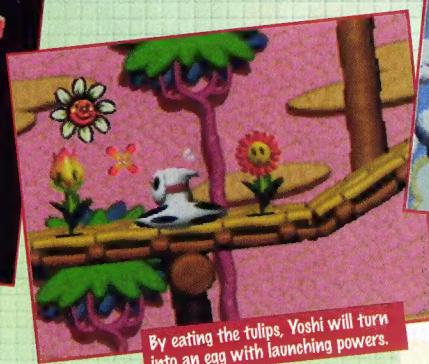
By eating the tulips, Yoshi will turn into an egg with launching powers.

Tongue in Cheek – What to Expect

Before we break down the game completely, something must be noted. We stated before that Yoshi's Story is about gameplay and not much else. This is true, but along with solid control, Nintendo has also added a very nice visual presentation. We haven't seen a platformer like this since the 16-bit days, so it's hard to say exactly how good Yoshi should look. The last classic platformer to truly shine was Donkey Kong Country. Yoshi's Story utilizes a similar graphic style, but mixes it with the wacky creativeness of Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island.

All of the environments are rendered and sharper in detail than DKC. Just wait until you see the water effects, and the way Nintendo manipulated the morphing of one of the bosses. The washed-out water color effects from Yoshi's Island are gone, but the vibrancy and general creativity surrounding level and character designs have returned. The levels are obscure and well-executed. Things you never thought could be in a game are in Yoshi's Story, and you will more than likely find yourself saying things like, "Did I just jump off of a twenty foot yarn ball?" or "Did I just run by an elephant policeman?"

Most of the villains and baddies from the Mario universe are in this title. Baby Bowser is the last boss, and the Shy Guys also play an important role. One of the big features in the game is based around the clan of Yoshi. The story states that baby Bowser cast an evil spell that changed the land into a storybook. Why he'd do this is beyond us, but the only creatures not affected are the Yoshi. Here's the catch though, only one Yoshi can challenge the forces of evil at a time.

Enter the gameplay. It's true, you have six different colored Yoshi (with the same abilities) to play as, yet only one can leave the nest. Also interesting is the fact that if you lose a Yoshi, it isn't coming back. This means that you only have six lives to beat the game with. But remember what we said about the Shy Guys? If you find a white Shy Guy on a level, and successfully bring him back to the nest, Shy Guy will reward you by retrieving one of the fallen Yoshi.

Beating the game with six lives may seem like a serious hassle, but it's not. The game is laid out so that you can only play one level on each of the six stages on the road to victory. There are twenty-four levels in total, so to challenge every stage you'll need to play through the game numerous times. And even that may not be enough, since the additional levels must be unlocked. To do this you must find the hidden hearts. Each heart found will open up a new level for the next stage of the storybook. If you find all three of the hearts, then you'll have access to all four levels on the next stage. This layout is identical to Star Fox 64. The unique thing to even the Yoshi titles is the fact that none of the levels have a formal end. To move on you must locate and grab thirty fruit. The fruits come in many forms, and can also be used to refill health.

The gameplay itself is close to the original, and again, eggshooting and tongue-grabbing are where the action is. If you don't know what either of these are, then we'll quickly explain. Basically, Yoshi can acquire eggs to shoot at enemies. Six eggs can be stored at once, and if you are searching for more, egg stations (which have an unlimited supply) can be utilized, and enemies can be eaten to produce more yolk. The Yoshi also have great tongue control. By extending the tongue they can pull themselves up onto certain platforms, eat enemies, and grab valuable power-ups. The biggest change is the loss of Mario. The plumber is no longer in this game. It's just the Yoshi and their quest that you must be concerned with. Waaaah!

To be successful, you will need to master eggshooting and the basic platforming skill of jumping. The Yoshi games have always been unique, in that an extra boost can be used at the end of each jump, and yes, this feature is also back and better than ever. Action/platform games have always pushed a player to master the controls. Yoshi's does this too, but it has an easier learning curve. There are help boxes located through the whole game, and running through the levels is fairly easy. The difficulty lies in finding the secrets.

My, you look familiar.

The blue Yoshi is happy.

Grab enough hearts on the previous page, and more levels will open up.

Yoshi has the best tongue control in video games.

ANDY, THE GAME HOMBRE

Concept:	8
Graphics:	9.5
Sound:	8.75
Playability:	9.5
Entertainment:	8

OVERALL:
8.75

"As would be expected, the graphics and playcontrol in Yoshi's rock! Every level is an onslaught of new textures, effects, and animation. The sound is top notch as well (I especially like the grunts, snarls, and random noises that come out of Yoshi as you maneuver him through each level). However, I do have one major complaint: for the hard-core player, this game is too easy. Even with the alternate routes, this game can be ripped through in one day. But when you sit back and look at this game on the whole, it's fun, it looks great, and is pretty addicting. Hard-cores may want to skip this one, but Nintendo fanatics will eat this game up."

REINER, THE RAGING GAMER

Concept:	5.25
Graphics:	8.75
Sound:	9
Playability:	9.5
Entertainment:	7.25

OVERALL:
8

"Yeah, this Yoshi adventure is a blast to play, but I still like the original SNES version better. I don't like the game structure at all. Yoshi's Island featured the classic Nintendo element of finishing a level with 100%. On the other hand, Yoshi's Story is set up the same as Star Fox 64, where the only thing you are hunting for is a heart to open a new level. Plus, to beat the game you only play six levels. What gives? I like my adventures to be strung out through a zillion different levels so I can feel satisfied at the end. This game, while having great platforming control and beautiful 2D graphics, comes up short in longevity and entertainment."

JON, THE GREEDY GAMER

Concept:	8
Graphics:	8.25
Sound:	8
Playability:	9.25
Entertainment:	8.5

OVERALL:
8.5

"Yoshi's is pretty classic. The jumping is right on, each level includes cool little side things like riding feathers or using springboards, and the game is easy enough for anyone to play. I'm all for 2D, as long as the gameplay's there, and in Yoshi's case, the gameplay is right on. But back to the difficulty factor. The game is easy, and each session lasts only six levels, and with so much health around, the challenge is light. There's nothing in this game that couldn't have been done on the SNES (except the Rumble Pak), but it does fill a niche on N64. Short, cute, and easy, but a lot of fun."

The Standard Yoshi Walk

Dry land is where the Yoshi feel most comfortable. Here they can manipulate their tongue in crazy ways, and stir up the most damage with easy eggshooting. These levels are filled with Shy Guys, and as a secret tip, be sure to stomp the ground to change their color to yours for a more powerful egg.

Don't be afraid to step on the slugs. They'll get you where you want to go.

If you can carry these boxes long enough you'll be rewarded with seven fruit.

Dangerous Spelunking

These stages are the same as the ones on land, but more jumping and eggshooting are required. These stages are slightly harder, and better skills are needed.

Believe it or not I'm walking on air.

Fire Walk With Me

Don't step in the lava or the Yoshi will immediately die. The lava sectors are easily the hardest levels in the game. You'll usually be required to make quick jumps, dodge fire bursts, and ride some kind of vehicle to safety.

Not all dragons are bad dragons.

The Backstroke

Did you ever think you would see a Yoshi performing the backstroke? Well, they do, and for having a body structure like a T-Rex, they can actually swim quite well. Eggshooting is not available here, and most of the fish are really nasty. Beware of the big fish that feast on Yoshi.

The big bad fish loves the taste of Yoshi.

In the oceans, new species are discovered everyday.

Capes Not Included

They can walk, they can swim, and they can fly...sort of. The Yoshi cannot fly, but they will have to master the skies in this game. Gusts of air, huge flying dragons, and leaf airboards will help make this dream come true.

Weeeee.

My magic leaf is special.

Beat the Boss

As with every action/platform game there are bosses. They range from tasty cream-puffs to nasty ghosts. Some can be eaten, others can only be shot. It will be up to you to find out what works and what doesn't.

This boss tastes just like cotton candy.

Run! It's an evil version of Mick Jagger.

How Do I Unlock the Secrets???

Finding all of the secrets in a game is something that most people want to do. Sometimes secrets come in the shape of codes, but most of the games made by Miyamoto and company don't have any of these. To unlock the secrets in Yoshi, you'll have to do it all through solid gameplay.

The hearts are one secret that everyone will be looking for. Most of them are well hidden in a secret area of a level. We found that thoroughly exploring the entire grounds of a level is the best technique, but sometimes strange things happen that you might miss.

For one, sometimes while running through a stage, you'll trigger a bubble or parachute that falls behind you. The only way you'll see it is if you turn around. From this point, you'll need to have an egg on hand to break the bubble and take its prize. Another interesting strategy is sniffing. The Yoshi dog will sometimes be on screen to tell you where to sniff, but moreoften than not, you'll be sniffing on your own. Smell the ground, and if something is there, Yoshi will hoot and holler. Now, use your butt slam to unearth what is hidden.

Use the sniff button to find secrets. The Yoshi dog will help with this task.

Where'd That Yoshi Come From???

Yes, the Yoshi community is a friendly place, but every once in a while, someone doesn't return from an adventure. Even from the start of the game, two valuable Yoshi are missing. The black and white Yoshi are hidden within the levels. You'll know you found one when you locate a large egg. If you then beat the level without dying, the new Yoshi will be yours.

A Tribute to the Shy Guy

These Bowser goons have been in almost every Mario game, and for once, we'd like to congratulate them on such an accomplishment. But we're still gonna kill them and use them as ammo. Bombs away!

The white Shy Guy will bring back your fallen Yoshi.

Yoshi and dog enter the Shy Guy community.

This hidden Yoshi loves to eat fruit. It'll even stomach red peppers!

Now, bring the egg back to the nest.
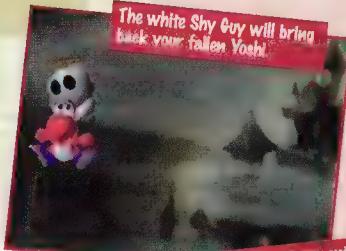
GI Feature

BY ANDREW MCNAMARA

Banjo-Kazooie

Zelda 64

F-Zero X

Yoshi's Story

H ow far would you travel to see Zelda 64? For me the answer was simple – halfway around the world. The plane ride from Minneapolis to Narita airport just outside Tokyo is a harrowing twelve hours. Leave one afternoon, arrive the next. While it terrorizes your sleep schedule, it does give you a chance to read a book (Airframe by Crichton was my choice) and play some Game Boy (Tetris Attack is a must for any traveler).

Certainly the plane ride is long, but for those of you who have never traveled to Tokyo before, the flight to Narita is just the beginning. Narita is a small city (at least in relative terms to Tokyo) that is a two hour bus ride southeast of the fourth largest city in the world. By plane, train, or bus, getting to the world's video game mecca is no easy task.

Home to Sega, Konami, Namco, Square, Enix, SNK, and Sony (just to name a few), Tokyo is a vidiot's dream come true. Everywhere it seems in this city of lights, electronic gadgets abound. Pachinko parlors, video arcades, and electronic specialty shops are everywhere and exist in harmony with the rest of the city. The goal of my trip is to accomplish two tasks: attend Nintendo's Space World '97 and adventure down to Tokyo's video game district magically named – the Akihabara.

The Nintendo Space World is located at one of Japan's premier convention centers called the Makuhari Meese. Just an hour's train ride from Tokyo, I arrive early, eager to see the wonders that Nintendo has to offer up this year.

I should let it be known that this is not my first trip to Nintendo's fall show. I have actually attended the last three, but as always, I'm extremely fascinated by Nintendo's line-up and can't wait to get my hands on the controller.

But I soon discover, as I do every year, that Nintendo is stingy with what they display. The games are either unfinished, or Nintendo has gone through the trouble of creating "playable" versions that only feature tidbits of a game.

As I arrive at the show all I see is a blur of games and peripherals. Half dedicated to the N64 and half to the Game Boy and 64DD, the stage was set for Nintendo to unveil their upcoming line-up. To add to the drama, Nintendo also unveiled numerous new toys including a voice interface for the N64, a mouse peripheral and an audio/video capture interface for the 64DD, and a Pocket Camera and Printer for the Game Boy.

The N64

The 64DD sounds exciting, but the first thing I wanted to check out was the N64 line-up. And after playing everything, I'm afraid to report that the situation is just as I had feared. There were games so amazing that you thought you absolutely, positively had to own them now, offset by a field of games you wished you'd never seen. The game of the show was Zelda 64. Its gorgeous looking graphics and mesmerizing gameplay wowed onlookers, and showed why the Nintendo 64 is the most powerful machine available, period.

Zelda 64 wasn't the only proof of the Nintendo 64's power, as the rest of Nintendo's first and second-party line-up looked great as well. Yoshi's Story, Banjo-Kazooie, 1080 Degree Snowboarding, and F-Zero X drew in crowds by the hundreds. Even Nintendo's new NBA Courtside title looked impressive in its early stages of development. Unfortunately, this is where the excitement ends, as there was little to shout about among the third-party titles.

To give you an idea of what I'm talking about, there were fourty-four N64 games at the show. Of those, eleven were already on American shelves, six were the aforementioned Nintendo titles, and eight were titles that we are absolutely positive we'll never seen in the States (i.e. Mahjong and Japan-only licensed games). That leaves 19 prospective titles. However, many of those are already announced for a U.S. release and have been in the works for a while, including Sonic Wings Assault, G.A.S.P., In the Zone '98, Nagano Winter Olympics '98, Fighting Cup, Quest 64, and Wild Choppers. With all said, that leaves only one N64 title, from someone other than Nintendo, that I hadn't seen, with a chance of making it to the States – Bio Tetris. The only problem is that it's basically the same as the original Tetris. So as you can see, third-party support is something Nintendo still hasn't addressed.

Even more frustrating is the fact that numerous games I had hoped to see were nowhere to be found – Conker's Quest and Hybrid Heaven being perhaps the most conspicuously absent.

Nintendo still continues to struggle in Japan, and the reason is rather obvious when you come to their show - six great games, and 30 mediocre games (consisting mostly of racers), does not satisfy the Japanese thirst. This logically leads us to Nintendo's hope for the coming years – the 64DD.

1080 Degrees Snowboarding

NBA Courtside

Pikachu

Mother 3

Sim City 64

Banjo-Kazooie

Super Mario RPG 2

Yoshi's Story

Nintendo
Spaceworld '97

Polygon Maker

Picture Maker

Pocket Stadium

Mother 3

Pocket Snap

Game Boy Adapter

Sim City 64

Pocket Printer

Super Mario RPG 2

Voice Recognition for N64

The 64DD

After years of anticipation, Nintendo's much lauded 64DD was finally unveiled. Still unplayable, the 64DD was shown to the crowd via demonstrations. One stage featured the first three games in the Mario Artist series – Talent Maker, Polygon Maker, and Picture Maker. The other stage featured the two 64DD versions of Pocket Monsters. The 64DD is planned for release in Japan this June.

The Mario Artist series by Nintendo and Nichimen Graphics gives players a chance to explore their artistic sides. To make the experience more enjoyable, Nintendo will release the N64 Mouse simultaneously with the Mario Artist series, as well as a Capture Cassette (which is basically a cartridge with audio/video inputs) so users can capture any image and use it in a picture.

Talent Maker lets the player create a character in a 3D environment and manipulate it any way they want. Picture Maker, like Mario Paint, lets the player draw and animate images on their 64DD. Polygon Maker is a 3D modeling tool that lets you create and paint polygonal objects. All three games will take advantage of the 64DD's save capabilities, so players can save their creations.

Pocket Monsters on the Game Boy, for those of you who are unfamiliar, is a game that lets the player collect and nurture a monster much like a Tamagotchi. Then, the player has the option to trade his creations with others, or fight them in battle. Pocket Monsters is currently available only in Japan, but it should hit the U.S. sometime next year. In Japan, the game has sold more units than Super Mario, and as you might guess, Nintendo is excited about the series.

On the 64DD, the Pocket Monsters series will be the first to utilize a new adapter that fits into an N64 controller, allowing the game to read data from a Game Boy cartridge. In Pocket Monsters' Stadium you can take your favorite Game Boy Pocket Monster and play with them on the 64DD. In Pocket Monsters' Snap you can take your Pocket Monster on an adventure through a 3D world on the 64DD.

As with every Nintendo show, there were games that were only available on video tape – Mother 3, Sim City 64, and Super Mario RPG 2. While little is known of Mother 3 or Super Mario RPG 2, we do know that Sim City 64 will include a special feature that lets you cruise around your world in first-person to check things out. Sim City 64 will also feature the same mini-games found on the standard cartridge version.

The last little tidbit of info from the show was supplied to me in Nintendo's press kit. If you're like me, I'm sure you've had a screaming session where you try to explain to the TV and game console that you did indeed push the jump button and "they" are obviously wrong. Well, now Nintendo is giving us a chance to talk to the N64 with their new voice interface. The device, which at this time is only compatible with the game Pikachu Genki De Chu, allows the user to input voice commands to interact with the character on-screen. There are 80 different commands in the game Pikachu. While it is certainly an interesting device, it has been tried before. During the late eighties, Konami released a similar device that enabled the player to input the word "fire" to blast aliens, rather than pressing the button. As you can probably guess, it didn't succeed. Perhaps Nintendo's marriage of the Hal 2000 and the N64 will fare better, but I wouldn't know, since the game wasn't available for play at the show, and at this point, it only understands Japanese.

Wonderland

After the dust had settled from Space World '97, I finally got to visit one of my favorite places in the world – the Akihabara. Also known as Electric Town, Akihabara is Tokyo's marketplace for electronic goodies. From hi-tech televisions, to air conditioners, to obscure video game collectibles – if it's cool, you'll find it here. After playing the latest arcade games at Sega's huge arcade located within the Akihabara, I headed to the shops. The stores here are amazing. From Sofmap's seven stories of vids to Computer Game's massive library of titles, this is the world's mecca for video games. Numerous shops have kiosks out in front of their stores, with games that have and haven't been released. For instance, on the day I went, Sony's Gran Turismo and Capcom's X-Men Vs. Street Fighter were available for play on the streets, but not to buy in the stores.

Some companies even do promotions to get consumers to shop in their stores. Sofmap was throwing a Monster Farmer tournament in front of their store that made it almost impossible to cross the sidewalk. But perhaps the best part, is that almost all the stores carry lots of toys and video game paraphernalia to go along with your gaming addiction.

Well, after buying some games, toys, and T-shirts it was time to head back home. I'm always sorry to leave, but it just makes it all the better when I get to come back. ∎

Nintendo Spaceworld '97

The Legend of Zelda 64

SIMPLY WONDERFUL!

- **Size:** 256 Megabit
- **Style:** 1-Player Action/Adventure
- **Special Features:** Multiple Weapons; Link Cam; Real-Time Cut Scenes; Horse Riding; Big Bosses; Lock-On Targeting; Link's Friend Navie
- **Created by:** Nintendo
- **Available:** April for Japanese Nintendo 64 (U.S. Release In July)

Zelda 64 is perhaps the most anticipated game to come to the N64 since Mario 64. Weighing in at 256 megabit (32 Megabyte), this should be the biggest and best adventure yet on the N64. At the Space World, there were only three playable levels, but they were impressive to say the least. The game uses literally millions of textures and the light sourcing effects in the game are simply breath-taking. Game environments also have weather effects like rain, snow, and the N64's classic fog, while the character animations for Link and his fairy friend Navie are certainly nothing to snicker at either.

As far as the game is concerned, the controls are simple. The analog joystick moves Link in 3D space, and the A and B buttons are used for wielding Link's sword and performing actions such as climbing ladders, hanging from ledges, pushing buttons, moving blocks, and opening doors. The bottom three C buttons are designated for alternate weapons and items such as the boomerang, axe, acorn bomb, bow and arrow, club, sling shot, and flute. Link can also crouch using the Right shoulder button, toggle the map on and off using the Left shoulder button, and engage the Link cam using the top C button.

In battle, Link zeroes in on enemies by using the Z button. When engaged, a lock-on target appears on the object or enemy that is closest to Link. In this mode, Link is always facing his target, so the analog joystick changes to allow the player to slide Link left and right, as well as back and forth. This feature is the secret to battle in Zelda 64, because once you are in battle, quick maneuvering and smarts are needed to defeat the various enemies. From sword wielding skeletons to massive reptile bosses, the action is non-stop.

As would be expected, the game is like any other Zelda adventure. You must travel from town to town, talk to the townsfolk, and find your way to the various dungeons. In the dungeons you can find the compass and map to help you explore, as well as classic Zelda puzzles and keys. Also, there will be times when Link gets to ride a horse to travel around his world. Link can even make the horse jump fences and obstacles, much like an equestrian event.

Inside the dungeons there are new challenges such as jumps and block puzzles that must be mastered. Jumping is rather easy – run full speed at a ledge and Link will leap out to the next ledge (leaving you to just worry about keeping him lined up for the landing, which is harder than it sounds). The blocks can be pushed, much like in the game Tomb Raider, and are used to gain access to different levels in the dungeons. All in all, maneuvering in the 3D dungeons is rather easy (due to our experience with Mario 64), but looking for ladders, solving puzzles, using items, and fighting enemies takes on a whole new meaning in 3D.

For example, in one dungeon you come to a room with a floor spinning around a four-sided statue and a door that won't open. To open the door you must face the statue and shoot out its eyes with your bow and arrow as you spin around. Sound easy? Well, when Link uses his bow and arrow the game shifts to a first-person view and is aimed much in the same way as Turok – you must angle your shot as well as lead your target. Tricky to say the least.

The final piece to the Zelda puzzle is the last thing you face in each dungeon – the bosses. In this game they are huge. One example is a monstrous reptile that tries to roll over Link. After each attack, the monster stops and starts to roar. To defeat him, you must lock-on the target and throw a bomb down his throat (yes, you can throw bombs). After it explodes in his innards, he once again starts to roll after you. Eventually you beat him and are treated to a great real-time cut scene of Link being transported through a tunnel of light to back outside the dungeon. Amazing.

For Zelda fans, this game is a dream come true – a 3D adventure that will challenge their brain as well as their gaming skills. Planned for a Stateside release in July, Zelda 64 will be available in Japan in April. Watch for this one, Nintendo fans. It's definitely the flagship of Nintendo's line-up.

アクシは 、・モリバのサ
よろしくネ…ジャラ!

1080 Degrees Snowboarding

Boarding With The N64

- **Size:** 64 Megabit
- **Style:** 1 or 2-Player Snowboarding
- **Special Features:** Excellent Physics; 8 Officially Licensed Lamar Boards; 5 Boarders; 6 Tracks Including Half-Pipe and Big Air; Rumble & Controller Pak Compatible; 5 Play Modes
- **Created by:** Nintendo
- **Available:** February for Japanese Nintendo 64 (U.S. Release in March)

Apparently, the hottest product that every video game system must have is a snowboarding game. Not wanting to leave its followers out of the fad, Nintendo has announced the development of their first snowboarding game 1080 Degrees. Only three tracks were available for play at the Space World, but six will be available on the final product.

At first glance, the thing that comes to mind is the amount of detail in this game. The snowboarders leave a groove in their wake, and the animation is smooth and flawless. Level environments, complete with sun flare, are filled with trees, rocks, and different snow surfaces including powder, packed snow, and ice. Game Informer learned that there are even night runs, complete with overhead light sources that create long shadows and a realistic strobe effect as the characters race down the hill.

Designed mainly as a racing game, 1080 will also feature in-game tricks, and a half-pipe. The tricks will be pulled off by inputting special moves while in mid-air. At this point, we have only seen a 180 and 360, but we doubt that the game would be called 1080 if you couldn't pull it off.

The button configuration is basic -- with the A button for an ollie, the B button for brake, and the Z button for crouch. Control is relayed through the analog joystick, giving the player a harder carve for sharper turns. During a standard run there will be logs to ollie and duck under, ledges to launch off, and alternate paths to take.

Game physics are solid with realistic turning and excellent interaction between the snow and the board. Players will find themselves bogging down in deep snow and sliding out of control on ice patches.

With different characters and boards to choose from, 1080 should have all the basic options of a good racing game. There will even be a 2-player split-screen mode for head-to-head match-ups. At this time, no U.S. release has been announced, but it should be available in Japan this February.

Nintendo
Spaceworld '97

F-Zero X

NBA Courtside

Being created by Left Field Productions of Los Angeles, NBA Courtside is the second title (behind Ken Griffey Baseball) to join the Nintendo Sports label. Although still early in development, the game should feature plenty of animation and realistic graphics. Carrying both the NBA and NBAPA licenses, this game is looking to bring the hard-hitting world of the NBA to the N64 this fall.

Even though NBA Courtside was only 50% complete, the control was already pretty tight. Featuring standard issue basketball controls (there was no icon passing in sight), the play was fairly basic, but Game Informer is betting that Nintendo will incorporate plays before the game is complete. Easily our favorite part of the game was the quick moving real-time cut-scenes when the players went into a dunk. No cheesy replays here, just smooth, television-style camera views. The only drawback we saw to this game was the rather slow play.

A RACER LIKE NO OTHER

- **Size:** 128 Megabit
- **Style:** 1 to 4-Player Racing
- **Special Features:** 4 Difficulty Levels; 30 Characters and Vehicles; 4 Play Modes - Practice, GP Race, Vs. Battle, and Time Attack; 4 Cups With 6 Tracks Each; Multiple Camera Views; Turbo Pads; Course Edit; Machine Edit
- **Created by:** Nintendo
- **Available:** June for Japanese Nintendo 64 (U.S Release In Fall)

Much like the original, F-Zero X is a racing game set in the future utilizing Hovercrafts. After our first hands-on experience, it's obvious the game is a graphical triumph over its Super NES predecessor.

Using polygonal geometry to create outrageous tracks and environments, F-Zero X features a field of 30 vehicles and characters. The vehicles themselves are rather basic, but acceptable once you see how fast this game moves out. They are rated in three categories, including Body, Grip, and Acceleration. The tracks are rendered on-the-fly and feature some insane loops and jumps (we heard from more than one person that the game made them queasy).

In GP mode, the game pits you against 29 other vehicles in a race for the checkered flag. There are four cups to conquer, each with six tracks. As before, the game features turbo pads that are located throughout each track, a power meter that can be refilled in the recharge zones, and boosters that are enabled after the first lap. The racing is basically the same, except the player can choose the torque/acceleration curve for the craft before each race, and the play control now features a powerslide button to navigate the tighter turns.

The noticeable difference in this game is that the tracks are highly refined. As would be expected, the game

features corkscrews, loop to loops, tunnels, and jumps, but F-Zero X has more to it than that. Some tunnels are completely round and allow the player to spin their vehicle completely upside-down. Conversely, there are also round parts of the track that allow the player to drive on any side. Sound like a one-way ticket to nausea? Well, it is.

Also new to this year's version is a track and machine edit mode. These modes were not accessible at the show, but they certainly sent our minds back to the days of Excitebike. When asked if we would be able to create our own tracks, Nintendo stated that this was still undetermined. While allowing the player to create their own tracks would be rather easy, creating the parameters that would keep the player from overloading the machine, would not. Let's hope that Nintendo passes this hurdle.

Expected to release in Japan this June, American gamers can look for this one sometime in the fall. While not the most graphically impressive game, F-Zero X offers an exciting ride that will challenge even the most seasoned gamer.

MY TWO CENTS

Space World '97 was a show of extremes. On one side, there is Nintendo's amazing line-up of games including Zelda, Yoshi, 1080 Degrees, F-Zero, and Banjo-Kazooie. On the other side, there is the mediocrity known as third-party product. Unlike other systems, Nintendo's N64 third-parties seem unable to make a game that stands on its own, or that (in my opinion) meets Nintendo's much lauded "Quality over Quantity" battle cry.

When I look at the third-party line-up I can think of only a handful of games that are decent – Konami's NBA In the Zone '98, T&E Soft's Augusta '98, and Imagineer's Sim City 2000 – everything else is rubbish.

On the other side of the coin, Nintendo's first and second-party line-up is banner. Zelda was the best game at the show, and F-Zero X, Banjo-Kazooie, and Yoshi's Story look to keep gamers up late for weeks. Even Nintendo's new snowboarding game, 1080 Degrees, looked good and shows promise, as did NBA Courtside. But are five games enough to carry a system?

If you asked me this question just after I played Zelda, I would certainly have given you a resounding "yes." But as I pass the time writing my summary of this show, I lean more and more towards the negative. It is almost as if Nintendo has set themselves up to be every player's "other system." For myself, the PlayStation is the system that I play almost constantly, but my N64 is always close-by for when a game actually gets released. When this happens, I immediately run home and lock myself into my apartment, because there's no denying it, their games are great. But for gamers who are limited to just one system, I believe Nintendo is giving them the short end of the stick.

From what I gather from Nintendo here in Japan, is that they believe the 64DD will be the catalyst enabling Nintendo 64 to become the number one platform. Their plan appears to be to sell quality games, and then offer upgrades for these games so that the product has a longer lifespan. They seem to believe that if companies continue on the same tried and true track of lots of different great, good, and bad products, this strategy will someday destroy the video game market.

Why? I don't know. It seemed to work just fine for them on the NES and Super NES. Maybe it is because Sony is having success with this strategy, that Nintendo is suddenly "against" lots of product.

And as far as the 64DD is concerned, I'm not impressed. For the amount of time it took to turn out this product, I certainly don't see anything that's got my head spinning. The night after the show I dreamed about Zelda, not Pocket Monsters' Stadium. Oh well, Zelda's good enough to forgive them; but personally, I want Nintendo to drop this silly 64DD thing and just concentrate on getting some more games.

TAKE OFF EH?

Vancouver, nestled comfortably along the Pacific coast, is an international port city capitalizing on an explosive trade business with Asia. Also close to the high tech industries in Seattle and Redmond, Vancouver is quickly becoming one of the most important cities in North America. It's no wonder EA's Vancouver studio is following suit, setting a pace that (so far) cannot be matched. Standards are set, deadlines are met, and the result is a stack of 'must have' titles that just keep getting better and better.

EA Canada (known to insiders as the Vancouver studio) is home to over 500 employees. Workers start about noon and stay long hours into the night, especially as those all-important deadlines approach. The individual teams have been working together for up to eight years, the result of which is a tight-knit and personable atmosphere. Numerous Canadian flags remind you of where you are, and the staff can be seen spending breaktime within a linked Daytona arcade cabinet. As a reward for recent successes, EA Vancouver is building an entirely new office building, designed with a college campus in mind. When the new studio is finally populated, it will foster an even closer working relationship between the different divisions.

GI Feature

Rumblings in Vancouver
THE RISE OF EA CANADA

NHL 99: The Motion-Capture Sessions

If you're of legal age, Canada means two things – beer and hockey. But if you're not old enough to enjoy a malted grain beverage, you can still admire a country that year after year pumps out an astounding pool of hockey talent. Yes, Canada is the premier hockey factory in the world, and it's only right that the NHL franchise was returned to its rightful heirs. In Canada, people live, breathe, and eat hockey. If you've never seen Hockey Night in Canada, if you've never listened to Don Cherry and Ron MacLean rant on about the wimpy European players, then you're missing hockey at its best. Up here, hockey is king, and after NHL 97 disappointed its legions of fans, the PlayStation project was transferred to Vancouver, a new formula derived, and thus appeared NHL 98. But what about NHL 99?

It all starts with motion-capture. Game Informer was on-hand at the 'mo-cap' shoot for NHL 99. Markus Naslund and Mattias Ohlund of the Vancouver Canucks provided the talent, but the real action was behind the scenes, at the computers and workstations that translate digital data into fluid, 3D animation. Starting with eight state of the art digital cameras set at mid-ice, the motion-capture models skate through a 'hot point' beneath the cameras. The hot point is very small (about 30' x 10'), so any move or motion that makes it into the game must take place within that hot point. When a move is captured, it is termed a cycle. A cycle can take any number of forms. Some simple cycles are slow skate, turn left, or fast skate. A more complex cycle could involve a forward stride, to a spin (with the puck between the legs), to another spin, and back to a forward stride, all captured within the hot point.

Reading the image recorded in the hot point, the infrared cameras triangulate the data, then send it to a computer beside the ice. The computer immediately builds a skeleton model that performs the cycle on-screen. If the capture was successful, the camera team gets the thumbs-up to go onto the next cycle. After all the motion-capture is finished,

Bruce McMillan, executive producer of FIFA and NHL.

Curt Bonn, stunt coordinator, has worked on every game in EA history except the Madden series.
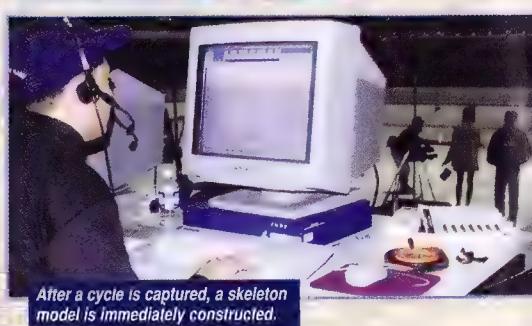
After a cycle is captured, a skeleton model is immediately constructed.

The Balance of Power

lectronic Arts is a massive company, second only to Nintendo in cumulative software sales. The company develops, publishes, and distributes both PC and console-based games in every genre imaginable. Each game comes affixed with the Electronic Arts logo, but few people actually know where the games come from.

Every major development company uses different studios: Konami employs KCET, KCEO, KCEJ, and others; Nintendo uses Nintendo of Japan and Rare; Sony has SCEI, SIS, and others. In the case of Electronic Arts, power sits predominantly in two locations: Vancouver and San Mateo. San Mateo has found recent success with the Madden series, NCAA Football, NASCAR 98, Nuclear Strike, and is hoping for a hit with March Madness 98. All good titles in their own right, but hardly enough to support the world's second largest gaming company. Furthermore, San Mateo is Electronic Arts' center of publishing. The recent agreement with DreamWorks, the acquisition of Maxis, and ownership of Bullfrog, Origin, and Jane's Combat Simulations sees countless titles travel the route through San Mateo for publication and marketing. However, beyond all this, the single most important product out of San Mateo is the Madden series, which had experienced a serious slip in market share by the end of 1997.

> **"Titles that had been lackluster in 1996 began appearing in new forms..."**

Vancouver, on the other hand, is quickly pulling away as the premier creative development center within Electronic Arts. The meat and potatoes of Electronic Arts – NHL, FIFA, NBA Live, Triple Play, and Need for Speed – are served up straight out of Vancouver, blue plate special style. The titles are quick to the counter, the portions are hefty, and there's plenty of extra parsley to top off each package.

In May of 1997, the rumblings in Vancouver started with the polygon Triple Play 98. Suddenly, other titles that had been lackluster in 1996 began appearing in new forms, and EA Vancouver's titles all matured into exemplary instances of dedicated, imaginative, and technologically superior programming. In fact, it would be correct to call the studio the polygon capital of EA. And to go one step further, if the Vancouver studio had not broke through in 1997, the do or die year of sports gaming, one has to wonder whether Electronic Arts could have kept the dogs of Sony, Konami, and Acclaim at bay.

As fans of the Vancouver studio, we got on the horn with Electronic Arts, and told them (in no uncertain terms) that the titles coming out of Canada were the best work the company had done in years. And so, two weeks later, Game Informer was smack dab in the middle of the Vancouver studio, learning all there is to know about what lies ahead in 1998.

the data heads back to the Vancouver studio, and the animators apply "skin" to the skeleton models. After the skin is applied, the production team links the various cycles together, and the foundation of the game is set.

NHL 99 includes hundreds of different skating and checking cycles, but with a subtle improvement. As mentioned above, this year's motion-capture was done on a full ice surface, and the cameras were positioned at center ice. This means that cycles can be captured at the peak point of a skater's speed. Last year, the team worked with only one half of the ice. Therefore, NHL 99 will not only be a faster game, but the mid to fast stride acceleration cycles will be better linked to emphasize a smoother transition game, and the new high-speed captures will make fast skating much more precise.

To help with the transition game, Marc Crawford (Stanley Cup winning coach of the Colorado Avalanche) is again a consultant to the project. Shifting strategies on-the-fly will be more in-depth, and different neutral zone breakouts and checking schemes can be implemented with the flip of a shoulder button. Feasibly, this could mean that different lines would demand different trap schemes or crossovers, all dependent upon the speed, checking ability, and offensive or defensive awareness of particular players.

Checking is also being retooled. In NHL 98, it was easy to bump players off the puck. Many people whined about this, but you have to remember that the ease of checking was necessary to counter the offensive speed burst button. Here at GI, you'd have to drag us away kicking and screaming before depriving us of that offensive speed burst button. But the Vancouver studio felt they had room for improvement with checking, so they're calling on Marc Crawford once again to help with the subtle aspects of checking. In NHL 99, players will have expansive checking ratings. For example, some players will have an easier time moving the opposition to a particular side, and defensive forwards will be better neutral zone checkers.

Ken Sayler, producer of NHL, believes that, "the whole sports gaming industry is getting back to gameplay and fluid control." Last year, NHL 98 set the pace, creating an easy to play, yet deeply involved hockey game. It was GI's unanimous decision for Sports Game of the Year, and the switch to Vancouver seems to have made all the difference.

> **"...the new high-speed captures will make fast skating much more precise."**

Mattias Ohlund of the Vancouver Canucks demonstrates his art.

At press time, no screen shots of NHL 99 were available.

There are going to be many additions to the season options in Triple Play 99. The biggest change this year is the addition of a salary cap. Players are now rated on a month-by-month basis. Each month, players are awarded points on the basis of performance. Points work towards the salary cap. If you reach the point cap, you won't have to cut players, but you will not be able to sign free agents and trades will be difficult. Package trades are possible, but once again, you must remain within the cap. Also new within the season is the daily matchup screen. This year, the display reads like a league-wide pitching form. Before starting your season game, you can scroll through the other games to look for exciting pitching matchups. Of course, you can still play any game throughout the entire season, but the new matchup screen will no doubt make it easier to follow the rest of the league. Up to twenty different players can simultaneously compete in one season, there is an excellent draft feature, and stats are fully tracked in 100 categories (the computer actually tracks 1300 stats, but only 100 of those appear in windows for user reference).

We liked the pitching in last year's Triple play, and not much has changed. Except that a pitch has been assigned to each icon button, and the ball/strike interface is determined solely by the d-pad. Batting will be similar as well, but there is a new first-person feature. We saw something like this in Madden 64's Helmet Cam, but Triple Play 99 looks to take it all a step further. If you choose first-person mode, you emerge from the dugout and approach the plate. You can see your hands out in front of you, and as you face the pitcher, the ball will come flying at you, chin music and all. If you connect, you'll also round the bags in first-person, watching as the first baseman stretches out to beat you.

Baserunning will still rely on the shoulder button and d-pad interface, but once again, there are some major improvements. Enter the slide. This year, it's not enough to just slide into the base. In Triple Play 99 you'll have six different slides to choose from. You can slide either to the inside or outside of the bag (head first or feet first). Since baserunners can slide, fielders also have to make the tag. Matching the tag to the slide is the only way to score an out, and there are four different tags: two sweep tags, and two quick tags. Furthermore, each slide and tag is animated in a different style for plays at home plate, and baserunners can slide to disrupt the double play.

In terms of animation, Triple Play 99's fielders have undergone massive improvement. Not only are the animations much smoother, but by using a process termed Inverse Kinematics, each player tracks the ball with his entire body. For instance, the eyes, the arms, the shoulders, each part will follow the ball in a realistic manner, whether it's hit to the left, the right, over the head, or between the legs. Fielders also have roughly double the different amount of catches available to them this year. Using Inverse Kinematics along with the catches, dives, and tags, means that users will continue to see new reactions and animations even after 162 games have been played.

The stadiums have also been redone. The Triple Play team took a tour of every major league stadium in MLB. The stadiums were photographed down to every last detail. These photographs were then brought back to the studio and used to render brand new stadiums for Triple Play 99. The stadiums are now photo-realistic. Every pole, wall, and flag appears in brilliant detail. Crowds within those stadiums are being focused on as well. Last year, the 'interactive crowds' were thrown in at the last minute. Because of this, there was no gradual filling of the stadiums, it was all or nothing. This year, the crowds will slowly fill up as the team climbs in the standings, and the newly recorded cheers will rise and fall as a player runs down a ball.

Buck Martinez and Jim Hughson are back in the booth. After making the final adjustments to Triple Play 98, EA Vancouver had enough banked commentary to fill an entire second CD. Thus, there are all new fake commercials, comments, and game analyses. Plus, since Triple Play 99 now tracks obscure stats such as performance on turf vs. grass, night vs. day, etc., Buck Martinez will comment on them in-between batters, or during the 7th inning stretch.

As a closing thought, Triple Play 98 was almost the perfect baseball game, but some players had a problem with their memory cards. Both Sony and Electronic Arts put the game though a massive bug test, trying to root out the memory card problem. After hundreds of hours of testing, neither company was able to reproduce the memory card bug. The two companies agreed that it must have been a problem concerning older memory cards. To prevent any further problems this year, EA is changing its memory strategy, and Triple Play is now programmed using the internal memory libraries provided by Sony. With all the stats, season options, and create player features, let's hope there's no further memory problems, because in Triple Play 99, you'll want to play each and every game of an entire season.

> *"Matching the tag to the slide is the only way to score an out..."*

The new stadiums are photo-realistic.

In Triple Play 99...

...EA will once again focus on fluid animation.
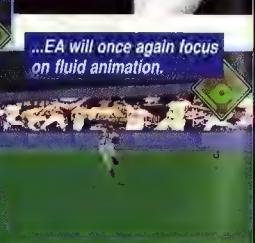
NEED FOR SPEED III

The High Performance Racer

Low Beam

High Beam

The Need For Speed series has carved a permanent niche in the gaming market. The games are fast and challenging, the tracks are long, and real production cars are accompanied by a slide show and spec sheet. Each successive Need for Speed incorporates new cars, better tracks, and improved technology, and Need for Speed 3 (NFS 3) is no exception. Note: the disappointing Need for Speed V-Rally was not an EA Canada product. The game was produced in Europe by Infogrames, and was published by Electronic Arts under the Need for Speed label. Thus, this new game is Need for Speed 3, not 4.

After playing NFS 3 we are excited. The police are back, the lightsourcing is excellent, and car speed and frame rate are a vast improvement. Nowhere is the lighting technology more apparent than in the Night Driving mode. Cars come equipped with both high and low beams. The fall colors of the trees sparkle in the light, and switching between low and high beams lends a realistic and intuitive feel to the driving.

NFS 3 offers ten tracks that can be raced forwards and backwards, in both standard and mirror mode. With the four variations of each track, there are, in essence, 40 tracks to perfect. Five of the tracks include secondary (alternate) routes designed for experienced drivers, but these routes must first be unlocked by beating the track. Oncoming traffic can be toggled on or off, and the "best line" feature can be activated.

Players can choose Single Race, Practice, or Pursuit mode. Pursuit mode is basically a race to stay one step ahead of the law. The police will set up roadblocks, chase you down from behind, even lay tire spikes in the road. If caught, you will receive a warning, but too many warnings and your license is revoked – game over. The low and high beams are also crucial to success. While in Pursuit mode, other drivers will flash their lights to warn you of roadblocks and speed traps, and if you don't turn off your high beams when a car is in front of you, the driver will become angry and difficult to pass.

The final list of cars has not been announced, but the Ferrari 550, Ferrari 355 F1, Italdesign BMW Nazca C2, Lamborghini Countach, and Jaguar XJR-15 have all been confirmed.

NFS 3, although still early, is an excellent looking racer that strikes a good balance between the arcade and simulation experience. It comes packed with tons of air, unbelievable wrecks, and a realistic acceleration arc. NFS 3 will ship in late March.

> "The police will set up roadblocks, chase you down from behind, even lay tire spikes in the road."

Wrong place, wrong time.

The lighting effects at night look outstanding.

Just like the Duke boys, you've gotta run that roadblock!

Burnin' donuts rules!

Diablo

EA Canada's second PC port, Diablo, is nearing completion. Set to release for PlayStation in April, Diablo resembles its PC counterpart in nearly every respect. Differences are minor, but important.

The PlayStation Diablo is more focused on lighting, and monsters lurking in shadows are a large part of the game's experience. Also, in Cooperative mode, two players can play at the same time. Additionally, players can save experienced characters to memory card, then use them at a friend's house. Like the PC version, the dungeons are randomly-generated, so the game packs a solid replay value punch. Watch for it in April.

The Sixth Annual Game Informer

Video Game Awards

Drum Roll Please...

A ton of games were released last year, and most of them landed onto the Sony PlayStation. Surprisingly, even though Nintendo had far less software, it still managed to fare well in the awards. The better the game – the better chance it has of winning some gold. We beat ourselves up for a week deciding who the winners should go to, and we're confident we made the right choices. So now, think back on 1997, think of the titles you believe deserve an award, and read on. What you see may surprise you – then again, your vote could be the same as ours.

SONY PLAYSTATION GAME OF THE YEAR
Final Fantasy VII
by Square Soft/Sony Computer Entertainment America

Nothing can touch FF VII. It was easily the biggest release of the year for any platform. A better combo of graphics and gameplay can not be found.

Honorable Mention:
• **Tomb Raider 2** by Core/Eidos Interactive

Games of the Year

NINTENDO 64 GAME OF THE YEAR
Star Fox 64
by Nintendo

Since there weren't too many N64 releases last year, it was fairly easy to choose a winner. Star Fox was great on the SNES, and now it's even better on the N64. GoldenEye and Turok were close, but Star Fox has higher replay value and a more diverse gameplay style.

Honorable Mention:
• **Turok: Dinosaur Hunter** by Iguana/Acclaim Entertainment

OVERALL BEST GAME OF THE YEAR
Final Fantasy VII
by Square Soft/Sony Computer Entertainment America for the Sony PlayStation

Final Fantasy VII has already sold one million copies in the States, and it appears to be drawing more non-RPGers into the RPG realm. The graphics are stunning and filled with awesome animation, FMVs, and light source shading. A thicker and more complex plot cannot be found on the PlayStation. It's like a good book, good movie, and good comic all mixed into one great game.

Honorable Mention:
• Tomb Raider 2 by Core/Eidos Interactive for the Sony PlayStation

SEGA SATURN GAME OF THE YEAR
Fighters Megamix
by TrueMotion/AM2/Sega

There were a lot of Saturn games last year, but only a few were impressive. Fighters Megamix did everything we wanted by combining most of Sega's fighters into one game. The technique in the VF games has always been one of the best in the industry, and now with more characters, the game is even cooler.

Honorable Mention:
• **Quake** by id/Lobotomy/Sega

PC GAME OF THE YEAR
Quake II
by id/Activision

Hey, it went to a first-person game! Imagine that. Quake II is a lot like the original, but now the graphics are enhanced, the enemies are smarter and larger, and all of the new weapons rule.

Honorable Mention:
• **Dark Forces II: Jedi Knight** by LucasArts

ARCADE GAME OF THE YEAR
Blitz
by Midway

NBA Jam meets NFL football in our pick for 1997. Top Skater was close, but we haven't seen a really good football game in the arcades for a while. Blitz is the best, and hopefully more games like it will come out of the woodwork.

Honorable Mention:
• **Top Skater** by AM2/Sega

OVERALL WORST GAME OF THE YEAR
Chronicles of the Sword
by Psygnosis for the Sony PlayStation

All of these games will make you cry when you play them. We had more honorables (which were mostly Acclaim PlayStation titles), but we thought we'd save a moment of embarrassment for those who made these games. Chronicles is absolutely horrible.

Honorable Mentions:
• **Courier Crisis** by New Level/GT Interactive for the Sony PlayStation
• **The Crow: City of Angles** by Acclaim Entertainment for the Sony PlayStation
• **Dragon Heart** by Acclaim Entertainment for the Sony PlayStation

Individual Awards

BEST HERO OF THE YEAR
Lara Croft from Tomb Raider 2
by Core/Eidos Interactive for the Sony PlayStation

Lara's the best thing to happen to vids since that fat old plumber started platforming. She has a great personality and an even better set of pistols. Tomb 2 is her crowning achievement so far. Let's just hope they don't screw things up by making Tomb Karts.

BEST VILLAIN OF THE YEAR
Sephiroth from Final Fantasy VII
by Square Soft/Sony Computer Entertainment America for the Sony PlayStation

This guy plays psychological mind games with the heroes of FF VII throughout the entire quest. He's evil, mysterious, and extremely deadly. He even has a cool tune of his own.

BEST NEW CHARACTER OF THE YEAR
Abe from Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee
by Oddworld Inhabitants/GT Interactive for the Sony PlayStation

He can fart. Need we say more? No, but we will. He can talk, his animation is fluid, and he has a charming appearance that seems to be a mix between Spawn and a toad.

BEST GRAPHICS IN A VIDEO GAME
Final Fantasy VII
by Square Soft/Sony Computer Entertainment America for the Sony PlayStation

These are not THE best graphics in a 1997 release, but they are the most significant. Better FMVs are hard to come by and the entire graphic presentation is absolutely perfect.

Honorable Mentions:
• **Crash Bandicoot 2: Cortex Strikes Back** by Naughty Dog/Universal Interactive/Sony Computer Entertainment America for the Sony PlayStation
• **Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee** by Oddworld Inhabitants/GT Interactive for the Sony PlayStation
• **Turok: Dinosaur Hunter** by Iguana/Acclaim Entertainment for the Nintendo 64

BEST PLAYABILITY IN A VIDEO GAME
Castlevania: Symphony of the Night
by Konami for the Sony PlayStation

The control fits like a glove. Special moves, inventive level designs, an inverted second quest, and tons of weapons and power-ups are all incorporated flawlessly in this, the first PS-X Castlevania.

Honorable Mentions:
• **Diddy Kong Racing** by Rareware/Nintendo for the Nintendo 64
• **Tomb Raider 2** by Core/Eidos Interactive for the Sony PlayStation
• **Star Fox 64** by Nintendo for the Nintendo 64

BEST SOUND IN A VIDEO GAME
Parappa the Rapper
Sony Computer Entertainment, Inc./Sony Computer Entertainment America for the Sony PlayStation

The theme to Parappa sticks in your head like Krazy Glue. Thankfully, they're good songs (in a wacky, singing dog kind of way).

Honorable Mentions:
• **Turok: Dinosaur Hunter** by Iguana/Acclaim Entertainment for the Nintendo 64
• **Triple Play 98** by EA Sports for the Sony PlayStation
• **Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee** by Oddworld Inhabitants/GT Interactive for the Sony PlayStation

MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT OF THE YEAR
Ahhh. These are the moments that touched us the most. We cried over Aeris in FF VII, laughed when Abe bit it in Oddworld, and almost fainted when we saw Lara drive her boat through a window in Tomb 2. We also saw Metal Gear Solid for the first time, and words cannot describe the experience when watching this game in action. It's simply amazing.

BEST VIDEO GAME ACCESSORY OF THE YEAR
Rumble Pak
by Nintendo for the Nintendo 64

Analog Controller
by Sony Computer Entertainment, Inc. for the Sony PlayStation

We have a tie. We couldn't decide which was more important to the industry – the Rumble Pak or Sony's Analog Controller. Either way, both of these are great additions that should be fully exploited in 1998.

Crash Bandicoot 2: Cortex Strikes Back

Tomb Raider 2

Command & Conquer: Red Alert

Cool Boarders 2

Intelligent Qube

BEST ACTION/PLATFORM GAME OF THE YEAR
Crash Bandicoot 2: Cortex Strikes Back
by Naughty Dog/Universal Interactive/Sony Computer Entertainment America for the Sony PlayStation

Crash won in 1996, and the sophomore jinx didn't hold him back in 1997. Simply said, Crash 2 is a great sequel that combines inventive techniques with classic platforming.

Honorable Mentions:
• **Mischief Makers** by Treasure/Enix/Nintendo for the Nintendo 64
• **Mega Man X4** by Capcom for the Sony PlayStation and the Sega Saturn

BEST ACTION/ADVENTURE GAME OF THE YEAR
Tomb Raider 2
by Core/Eidos for the Sony PlayStation

Lara Croft is slowly becoming the biggest thing to ever hit the video game scene. She has a rare spunk that is only topped by the size of her quest. This sequel is enormous in size and depth, and dynamic in graphics and story.

Honorable Mentions:
• **Castlevania: Symphony of the Night** by Konami for the Sony PlayStation
• **Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee** by Oddworld Inhabitants/GT Interactive for the Sony PlayStation
• **Treasures of the Deep** by Black Ops/Namco for the Sony PlayStation

BEST STRATEGY GAME OF THE YEAR
Command & Conquer: Red Alert
by Westwood Studios/Virgin Interactive for the Sony PlayStation

Talk about complete domination. Red Alert soared over every other strategy game in 1997, and the best thing is, it's ten times better than last year's C&C. With fluid scrolling, more units to command, and sophisticated link play options, it is not only the best strategy game of the year, but one of the most addictive as well.

Honorable Mentions:
• **Vandal Hearts** by Konami for the Sony PlayStation
• **WarCraft II: The Dark Saga** by Blizzard/Electronic Arts for the Sony PlayStation
• **Carnage Heart** by ArtDink/Sony Computer Entertainment America for the Sony PlayStation

BEST RACING GAME OF THE YEAR
Cool Boarders 2
by UEP Systems/Sony Computer Entertainment America for the Sony PlayStation

1997 saw more racing game releases than at any other time in history, but only Cool Boarders 2 went to the extremes to present diversity in concept and gameplay. With a half-pipe, board design, a slew of unique tracks, and great multiplayer options, Cool Boarders 2 never disappoints.

Honorable Mentions:
• **San Francisco Rush** by Atari Games/Midway for the Nintendo 64
• **Diddy Kong Racing** by Rareware/Nintendo for the Nintendo 64
• **Rally Cross** by Sony Interactive Studios/Sony Computer Entertainment America for the Sony PlayStation

BEST PUZZLE GAME OF THE YEAR
Intelligent Qube
by Sony Computer Entertainment, Inc./Sony Computer Entertainment America for the Sony PlayStation

The only game worth mentioning is Sony's Intelligent Qube. The rest of the puzzle games released were not very impressive. IQ puts your mind through a series of tests and then makes you feel stupid. You have to admire that.

BEST FIRST-PERSON GAME OF THE YEAR
GoldenEye 007
by Rareware/Nintendo for the Nintendo 64

GoldenEye 007 is a technically sound release in every category. The sniping mode, random enemy deaths, and 007 gadgets turned this game into more than anyone could have imagined. As a 1-player game we like Turok better, but Turok doesn't have the awesome multiplayer options that put GoldenEye on top.

Honorable Mentions:
- **Turok: Dinosaur Hunter** by Iguana/Acclaim Entertainment for the Nintendo 64
- **Quake** by id/Lobotomy/Sega for the Sega Saturn
- **Duke Nukem 3D** by 3D Realms/Lobotomy/Sega for the Sega Saturn

BEST SHOOTER GAME OF THE YEAR
Star Fox 64
by Nintendo for the Nintendo 64

This genre is somewhat vague, but if we divided it up, we'd probably end up with sixty new categories holding one or two games each. Luckily, the winner was easy to pick. The return of Fox McCloud and gang in Star Fox 64 was a huge moment for the N64. It was the first Rumble Pak title, and featured great gameplay, sound, and multiplayer mini-battles.

Honorable Mentions:
- **ONE** by Visual Concepts/ASC Games for the Sony PlayStation
- **Nuclear Strike** by Electronic Arts for the Sony PlayStation
- **Colony Wars** by Psygnosis for the Sony PlayStation

BEST FIGHTING GAME OF THE YEAR
Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha
by Capcom for the Sony PlayStation

Hadoken! Yes, it was nice to say that again, and the great thing is, it's a completely new SF and not an upgrade. EX is a great game that rivals the hand-drawn series in animation and technique.

Honorable Mentions:
- **Fighters Megamix** by AM2/Sega for the Sega Saturn
- **Soul Blade** by Namco for the Sony PlayStation
- **WCW Vs. NWO: World Tour** by Asmik/THQ for the Nintendo 64 (Yes, we know it's not a "true" fighter, but we had to put it somewhere.)

BEST ROLE-PLAYING GAME OF THE YEAR
Final Fantasy VII
by Square Soft/Sony Computer Entertainment America for the Sony PlayStation

FF VII took RPGs to the next level. It featured some of the best graphics and cinematics of any game last year. RPGs were once lacking in appearance. FF VII just proved that they can look the best and still feature a fascinating story and lengthy quest.

Honorable Mentions:
- **Suikoden** by Konami for the Sony PlayStation
- **Persona** by Atlus for the Sony PlayStation
- **Wild Arms** by Media Vision/Sony Computer Entertainment America for the Sony PlayStation

BEST NEW CONCEPT IN A VIDEO GAME
Parappa the Rapper
by Sony Computer Entertainment, Inc./Sony Computer Entertainment America for the Sony PlayStation

Have you ever seen a game as wacky as Parappa the Rapper? No, and you probably won't for a while. Flat characters that rap to hilarious songs is definitely one of the weirdest things to grace the game scene.

Honorable Mentions:
- **Carnage Heart** by ArtDink/Sony Computer Entertainment America for the Sony PlayStation
- **Monster Rancher** by Tecmo for the Sony PlayStation

GoldenEye 007

Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha

Parappa the Rapper

BEST DEVELOPER OF THE YEAR
Rareware

This award goes to the developer who did no wrong in 1997. With Blast Corps, GoldenEye 007, and Diddy Kong Racing, Rareware easily nabbed the highly acclaimed Best Developer of the Year award. They did delay Banjo-Kazooie and Conker's Quest until later this year, but GoldenEye was delayed numerous times and we forgave them when we saw it, so expect to forgive them again when these two games (and whatever else they have cooking) hit in '98.

Sports Awards

BEST SPORTS GAME OF THE YEAR
NHL 98
by EA Sports for the Sony PlayStation

NHL is still EA's best series, and 98 is quite possibly their best offering yet. It has great control and a fancy TV-style appearance.

Honorable Mentions:
- **Triple Play 98** by EA Sports for the Sony PlayStation
- **NFL GameDay '98** by Sony Interactive Studios/Sony Computer Entertainment America for the Sony PlayStation

BEST FOOTBALL GAME OF THE YEAR
NFL GameDay '98
by Sony Interactive Studios/Sony Computer Entertainment America for the Sony PlayStation

The change to polygonal graphics gave GameDay the award. GameDay opened up the future of football with this year's release, but Madden 64 was close behind

BEST BASEBALL GAME OF THE YEAR
Triple Play 98
by EA Sports for the Sony PlayStation

Hands down – Triple Play 98. Except for the ability to go on strike, what else could you want in a baseball title?

BEST SOCCER GAME OF THE YEAR
International Superstar Soccer 64
by Konami for the Nintendo 64

Wow! Konami has scored a serious goal with this game. Realistic control and animation puts this title on top.

BEST HOCKEY GAME OF THE YEAR
NHL 98
by EA Sports for the Sony PlayStation

We thought this was the battle to watch, but EA and NHL 98 blew every other hockey title out of the water. A great game in every way possible.

BEST BASKETBALL GAME OF THE YEAR
NBA Shoot Out '97
by Sony Interactive Studios/Sony Computer Entertainment America for the Sony PlayStation

Sony's 1997 version of Shoot Out is still better than EA's Live 98. It was close, but Shoot Out has better physics and a stricter difficulty.

Game Informer's TOP TEN

Editors' Top Ten Games for February

10. Diddy Kong Racing – N64
9. WCW Vs. NWO: World Tour – N64
8. Monster Rancher – PS-X
7. Crash Bandicoot 2 – PS-X
6. X-Men Vs. Street Fighter – SS
5. Final Fantasy VII – PS-X
4. Cool Boarders 2 – PS-X
3. Tomb Raider 2 – PS-X
2. Final Fantasy Tactics – PS-X
1. Resident Evil 2 – PS-X

Readers' Top Ten Games for February

10. Mortal Kombat 4 – Arcade
9. Star Fox 64 – N64
8. WCW Vs. NWO: World Tour – N64
7. Crash Bandicoot 2 – PS-X
6. Ghost in the Shell – PS-X
5. GoldenEye 007 – N64
4. Diddy Kong Racing – N64
3. Resident Evil 2 – PS-X
2. Final Fantasy VII – PS-X
1. Tomb Raider 2 – PS-X

Top Ten CD Monster Births in Tecmo's Monster Rancher... (Note: This is a Joke)

10. Rage Against the Machine/Evil Empire begets a Barney
9. Partridge Family/Greatest Hits begets a Warm Reuben Sandwich
8. Tecmo's Monster Rancher (while holding start) begets a Game Boy Pocket Monster
7. Madonna/Like a Virgin begets an Aeris
6. Pink Floyd/Wish You Were Here begets a Blasto
5. Culture Club/Church of the Poison Mind (CD single) begets a Nintendo Logo
4. Bo Diddley/Who Do You Love (CD single) begets a Cammy
3. Castlevania: Symphony of the Night begets a Metroid
2. Windows 95/Install begets a Broken PlayStation
1. Acclaim's Fantastic Four begets Nothing

Introducing the Prequel to Shadows of the Empire

Shadows of the Empire filled the gap between **The Empire Strikes Back** and **Return of the Jedi**, but not completely. Enter **Star Wars: Shadow Stalker** – the prequel to *Shadows*. This one-shot comic brought to us by **Dark Horse Comics** and **Lucas Film** is packed with action and Stormtrooper killing. The story revolves around Jix, a former Academy combat trainer turned Lord Vader's assassin. Darth is in most of the story, but as with any new *Star Wars* adventure, never-before-seen characters fill most of it.

Could this be the next LucasArts **Nintendo 64** game? In a way it makes sense. There is still plenty of time before any games will be made from the future *Star Wars* films, and *Shadows* was such a smashing success. Let's hope it happens. Jix is much cooler than Dash – the Han wannabe.

Sega of America To Bring Shining Force To U.S.

Sega of America announced that a sequel to one of its most popular strategy/RPG series, **Shining Force**, will be making its way to the **Sega Saturn**. The RPG in question is aptly titled **Shining Force III** (see GI News, Nov., '97).

In Japan, *Shining Force III* has already been released, but not in full form. Only the first scenario is currently available and two additional scenarios will be made available in March and July respectively. Sega of America has not revealed the details of the U.S. release, but the company will more than likely follow suit by releasing the scenarios over a three to six month period. The U.S. version of *Shining Force III – Scenario One* should release in the 2nd quarter (April – June) of this year.

Sega Halts Saturn Distribution In U.S., Concentrates On Software

Sega of America has all but thrown in the towel for its **Sega Saturn** hardware support in North America. Sources within Sega indicate that in December the company asked for final orders on Saturn hardware from all or most of its distributors and retailers with the indication that there will be no further replenishments.

To say the least, the Saturn has been battered in sales, as Sega's share of the 32/64-bit market has dwindled to less than 5%, and is the likely motive behind Sega of America's recent action. As U.S. software development for the system is virtually extinct, Sega of America still has plans to continue software support via the translation of software originating from Japan. The Asian market for the Saturn is still very lucrative as the Saturn commands at least 20% of the market versus the **PlayStation** (70%) and **Nintendo 64** (10%).

Sega of America's move also opens numerous questions of **Sega's next hardware system**. Sega, for over a year, has been lining up potential developers for its next platform in both Japan and the U.S. Indications have to favor that Sega of America may make a move to push for new hardware to release in the U.S. prior to Japan. An unprecedented move as the video game industry is concerned, but a crucial Sega of America announcement at the **Electronic Entertainment Expo '98** in May could end the speculation.

A New Puzzler From Ocean

Ocean of America has announced that it will publish U.K.-based **Zed Two's** *Wetrix* on the **Nintendo 64** and **PC**. In *Wetrix*, random shapes are dropped onto a flat, square surface in order to build pools, channels, and dams for containing water balloons that also drop onto the playing surface. To score points, players must evaporate the water by utilizing falling fireballs. In addition, there are earthquakes, bombs, and other pitfalls to hinder a player's water containment efforts.

Wetrix is still early in development and it is not likely to be released by Ocean until April, but as for an intriguing puzzle game, it already has us hooked. A number of game modes including two-player battle should make this a puzzle game to look for on the N64.

In other Ocean news, the long awaited and often delayed **Mission: Impossible** for the N64 is delayed yet again. Currently under development at **Infogrames** in France, don't expect to see that game on retail shelves until 2nd quarter of this year.

New Info On Gran Turismo

Sony's massive racing game, **Gran Turismo**, has made its debut in Japan, but **Sony Computer Entertainment America (SCEA)** is still a little tight-lipped about its arrival Stateside.

As reported last month, the Japanese game boasts over 140 cars from a long list of manufacturers. SCEA's legal department is making sure not to infringe on any licensing agreements before it makes definite release plans for *Gran Turismo*. The licensing for this racing game is a difficult task for Sony because there are a huge number of auto-manufacturers included. All of the auto companies have different needs and requirements.

Sony might be a little racing-game-sensitive with the recent licensing mishaps concerning **Psygnosis'** **Formula 1: CE** and still won't commit to what, or how many, cars will be in the North American version of *Gran Turismo*. Sony literature has stated that "over 120" vehicles will be included in the U.S. version. The reason it will likely have fewer cars than the Japanese version is that many manufacturers such as Nissan and Toyota have cars that are sold exclusively in Asia. The inclusion of certain Japan-only cars may cause consumer confusion.

The last announced release for Gran Turismo was March; however, *Game Informer* speculates it could move to the 2nd quarter of '98.

GRAN TURISMO
THE REAL DRIVING SIMULATOR

Shoot Out '98 Nears Completion

The design team at **Sony Interactive Studios America's** San Diego, California sports development studio is currently putting the finishing touches on **NBA Shoot Out '98**.

The 1997 version was *Game Informer's* choice for Basketball Game of the Year (see pg. 27) and the franchise has consistently improved since it was debuted in 1996. *NBA Shoot Out '98* will release on PlayStation in March.

G I N E W S

WHAT'S HOT • TECH TALK • MUTATION NASHUN • COMIC WATCH • TOP TEN • TRIVIA • NAME THAT GAME! • WHAT'S HOT • TECH TALK • MUTAT

MK4 for PlayStation on the Way

A source within **Midway** confirmed that **MK Mythologies** does not lie. Yes, **MK4** is coming to the **PlayStation** and **Nintendo 64** in April.

Along with innovative weapon use, MK4 is the first polygonal MK, it is the first 3D MK, and it features many characters new to the MK universe. The different endings help clear up some of the mysteries surrounding both MK4 and MK Mythologies, but if you haven't played MK Mythologies, you'll have missed some crucial parts of the story. Midway hopes to include each and every 'ality found in the arcade version, along with the endings.

In other Midway news, **Mace: The Dark Age** for PlayStation has been canceled.

Fox Interactive Forms Sports Label

Fox televises sports in almost every major category, and has pioneered a few innovative presentation features. For football, Fox offered the inset box complete with score and game clock. For Hockey, Fox introduced the relatively useless (and very annoying) puck highlight and trailer. Now **Fox Interactive**, in cooperation with **Gremlin Interactive**, has formed **Fox Sports Interactive**, simultaneously announcing a slew of new **Sony PlayStation** titles set for release in '98.

Gremlin, based in Europe, has already shown off the new Fox Sports Interactive titles at last fall's ECTS in London, England under Gremlin's own **Actua** label. The Actua tag will still be present on the European releases, but in the U.S. the series will now be known as Fox Sports. Here are the games that we should see next year: **Fox Sports Hockey**, **Fox Sports Golf**, **Fox Sports Tennis** and **Fox Sports Soccer**. Expect television personalities and other TV-style treatments (clank, schwung, swoosh) that are trademarks of Fox's broadcasts to be added to the games.

An interesting sidenote is a possible future conflict between **John Madden's** commitment to Fox broadcasting, as well as his commitment to **EA Sports'** football series. John Madden is the heart and soul of Fox Football, and if Fox does announce plans to release a football game, it will be difficult to push the Fox Football experience without Madden and Summerall.

An Early Look at Alien Resurrection: The Game for PlayStation

Fox Interactive is putting us right in the action with a new game based on the film **Alien Resurrection**. While production is still in its early stages, we were able to extrude a few details from the folks at Fox.

Resurrection is being programmed by **Argonaut Software**, whose credits includes **Star Fox** for **SNES** and **Croc** for **PlayStation** and **Saturn**. The game closely follows the plot of the movie, as players find themselves aboard the military research vessel Auriga. Inside the crippled spacecraft, the aliens close in on the few survivors, and Dr. Wren is about to escape to Earth.

Resurrection features five playable characters and takes place in a third-person perspective. The camera is automatically controlled, and will shift focus and distance at different points during gameplay. The environments in each of the thirteen levels are fully destructible, and an unique twist is that players must interact with Father, the spacecraft's talking computer.

Although Fox's **Independence Day: The Game** was a major disappointment, Alien Resurrection looks to be on the right track. The game is set for release in April.

Alien fans will also be pleased to know that Fox's Alien Vs. Predator has been confirmed for a Fall '98 release.

Working Designs Announces New PlayStation Project

Working Designs, best known for translating Japanese RPGs for the U.S., announced in May of '97 the debut of its **SPAZ** label. SPAZ prides itself on publishing classic shooter action, and as promised, the first title published under the SPAZ label was **Taito's Raystorm**.

A second SPAZ PlayStation title has been announced in the form of **Elemental Gearbolt**. Gearbolt is an action/shooter developed by **Sony Computer Entertainment, Inc.** of Japan. Elemental Gearbolt is a light gun game that supports **Namco's Gun Con** as well as standard light guns. Gearbolt also features an unique look, with anime-inspired graphics and FMV sequences.

Working Designs' president, Victor Ireland, stated the company has a number of other Sony PlayStation acquisitions in the works, but, at press time, he declined to comment as details had not been finalized.

Square Announces Bushido Blade 2

Bushido Blade definitely broke the mold of head-to-head fighters when it was released last year for **Sony PlayStation**. Honorable fighting, one-hit deaths, and a free-roaming environment were all revolutionary concepts. Following up on the success of Bushido Blade, **Square** is back to the drawing board with plans to release **Bushido Blade 2** in Japan this summer.

At this point, Square has given us little information on the game, but it appears that the story is set a couple of years in the future – as returning characters have aged. Black Lotus and Red Shadow have not been seen yet, but there are tons of new characters who all sport unique and crazy personalities. Square Soft promises bigger and better things from the sequel. Look for more information on Bushido Blade 2 in the coming months.

(Japanese Saturn pictures shown)

Capcom Alters X-Men Vs. Street Fighter For PlayStation

Capcom will bring its clash of the titans, **X-Men Vs. Street Fighter**, to the **Sony PlayStation** with a major change from its arcade and **Sega Saturn** counterparts.

If you've already seen Game Informer's "Only In Japan" review of Capcom's X-Men Vs. Street Fighter for Sega Saturn (see pg. 48), then you're familiar with the team battle style of play where a player picks two fighters to switch between at any time during the fight. However, due to PlayStation hardware limitations and the absence of the 4MB cart that accompanies the Saturn game, X-Men Vs. Street Fighter will not have the player switch feature. The complete concept of the game may be lost on PS-X without this feature, and Capcom may remarket the game using a slightly different title.

VIDEO GAME TRIVIA

1. Which one of the Super Mario Bros. games did not feature Bowser as the Mario archenemy?

2. In Japan, he is known as Gouki. What is this Street Fighter's name in the U.S.?

3. What game featured three overgrown monsters destroying city after city? (Hint: the lizard's name was Lizzy)

4. What city is home to Nintendo's U.S. headquarters?

5. What was the first racing game released in America for the Sony PlayStation?

(Answers on the bottom of page 33)

Name That Game!

This Taito game first appeared in arcades in 1983. Control was split between a joystick for movement and an aluminum click wheel for firing. There were two sizes of tanks, and players could throw grenades. What game is it?

(Answer on the bottom of page 33)

G I N E W S

WHAT'S HOT • TECH TALK • MUTATION NASHUN • COMIC WATCH • TOP TEN • TRIVIA • NAME THAT GAME! • WHAT'S HOT • TECH TALK • MUTAT

It Has Begun

We've been waiting for this to happen in the States. Finally, the stars of the video game scene are exploding into the merchandise market. **Tomb Raider's Lara Croft** is making the biggest impact. She has already had a toy release (with more on the way in the following months) and last month she ran wild in her first comic – **Tomb Raider/Witchblade** by **Top Cow Entertainment**.

Now, it's **Resident Evil's** turn. The world of survival horror is biting its way into the toy franchise as well, courtesy of **Toy Biz**. There will be five toys in the first wave, and it is rumored that **Resident Evil 2** toys will follow this up in the summer. To capture the true essence of the game, **Capcom** equipped the sculptors with artwork and screens from the game for the main characters. But, for Tyrant and the zombies, not much material was available to work with. So Toy Biz provided medical textbooks and skin disease indices to truly capture the feel of the game.

Finally, don't expect to see the **Final Fantasy VII** toy line until late this year. Supposedly, **Bandai** is holding off until it can release the **Summon Monster** wave here as well. Certain retailers are selling the Japanese imports right now, but for prices nearly reaching thirty dollars for one figure, we suggest you wait until the line is officially released here for seven dollars a pop. The toys will be identical, and only the packaging will be changed.
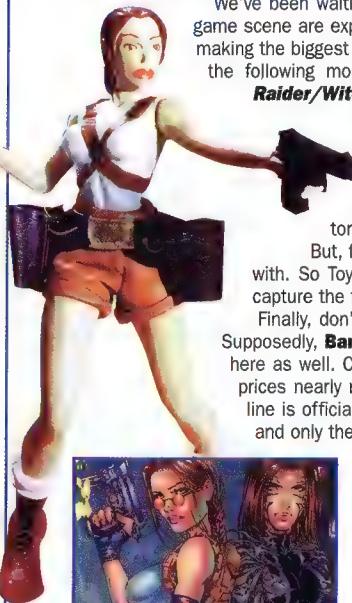
Girls just wanna have fun in Tomb Raider/Witchblade.

The "it's not a tumor" Tyrant toy looks great.

Now all we need is a scale model of the mansion.

Final Fantasy Anime a Sure-Fire Hit

With rumors of **Square Soft's** first full-length feature film flying around the industry, we invite you to check out something that could hold a very similar story and general design. The anime **Final Fantasy: Legend of the Crystals** is created by **Urban Vision** and **American Anime**. This two episode tape has a running time of sixty minutes, and features a great story which is a follow-up to the Japanese **Super Famicom** release **Final Fantasy V**.

Square never released *FF V* here, and this may be our only opportunity to learn some of its story. There are summon spells, huge demons, and scenes from *FF VII* that appear to be modeled from this anime. Another tape with episodes 3 and 4 will be released this February. After these are released, the next thing we'll probably see is Square's CG movie. Awesome!

Former Square Soft Members Form Crave Entertainment

What's Hot!

Crave Entertainment, Inc. published its first title, **Robotron 64**, for the **Nintendo 64** in December and has big gaming plans for 1998.

Formed as a division of **SVG Distribution**, Crave opened a new development studio in Seattle, Washington. Including former members of **Square Soft's** defunct Redmond, Washington office, as well as other key industry veterans, the company will develop and publish titles for both the N64 and **Sony PlayStation**. Crave announced that it will publish at least six titles in 1998, one of which will be the company's first internally developed product for PlayStation, an RPG entitled **Shadow Madness**. Shadow Madness is a title that evokes high expectations from many in the industry, considering that Crave's **Rich Silvera** and **Ted Woosley** had a large role in bringing Square's **Super NES** RPGs to the U.S.

Metal Gear Solid Release Set and Other Insider News From Konami

KONAMI.

Konami's highly anticipated **Sony PlayStation** title, **Metal Gear Solid**, has been confirmed as a 2nd quarter release in Japan. **Konami of America** CEO, **Makoto Sano**, indicated the game should appear for the Japanese PlayStation sometime in April. Gamers in the U.S. will have to wait a few months longer, but Metal Gear Solid will be available in late August or early September.

Designed by the top development team at **Konami Computer Entertainment Japan**, Metal Gear Solid is headed by Konami veteran **Hideo Kojima**. The game has become one of the gaming industry's most anticipated titles since it was debuted at the 1997 Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3). Sources inside Konami also revealed a number of other titles in the works for 1998.

Originally released in the arcades, **GTI Club** is in progress for both **Nintendo 64** and PlayStation. This racer gives the player free reign in France's Cote D'Azur. GTI Club features five different cars and three difficulty levels. In easy mode, the player has two shortcuts available, and in hard mode the entire environment is available to explore and exploit. Cruise over sidewalks, into parking ramps, through gas stations, and much more as you race to the finish. The N64 product is under development at Konami's Kobe, Japan studio where **Castlevania 64** is also being developed. The PlayStation product is rumored to be under way at one of the Tokyo studios, likely **Konami Computer Entertainment Tokyo**. No release date had been set, but it is probable that these two games will not be officially announced for the U.S. until the 1998 E3 in Atlanta.

A PlayStation fighter, "**Kesami**," is on the way. Known also as **Varied Arts**, Konami said that it should release as soon as March in the U.S.

As reported by Game Informer, "**C**" is the next installment of the popular **Contra** series and we gleaned the first few screen shots. The game is reportedly being developed by **Appaloosa**, the same team responsible for **Contra: Legacy of War** for the PlayStation and **Sega Saturn**. Considering the lukewarm reception to the first 32-bit version, "C" has something to prove to the legions of fans who recall the monumental versions on the NES and SNES. From the looks of these shots, "C" may rekindle the Contra fame of old. Konami has stated that "C" should release for the Sony PlayStation in March.

In other developments, Konami allocated five design and programming teams to work on Sega's next hardware system. However, the status of these teams is in limbo as they wait for Sega to finalize development tools.

Konami's "C"

Video Game Trivia Answers:
1. Super Mario Bros. 2 (If you said Mario Bros. it's wrong because they weren't "Super")
2. Akuma
3. Rampage
4. Redmond, WA
5. Ridge Racer

Name That Game Answer:
Front Line

NHL BREAKAWAY 98

THE FIRST CONTENDER

- **Size:** 64 Megabit
- **Style:** 1 to 4-Player Hockey
- **Special Features:** NHL and NHLPA Licenses; Variable Player Sizes; Complete Team Rosters; International Teams; Icon-Based Passing; Create Player; Draft and Trade Players; Coach Firing; Injury Therapy; Rumble & Controller Pak Compatible
- **Created by:** Iguana Entertainment for Acclaim Sports
- **Available:** February 20 for Nintendo 64

Slowly but surely, the N64 library of sports games increases. Nintendo still has a long way to go and will probably never obtain the volume of sports-related titles that are on the PS-X, but at least N64 owners will finally have a choice when it comes to how to spend their hockey dollars. In the past, it has been Midway's Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey with a monopoly on the N64's hockey market. Without competition, Midway was able to relax and offer no improvements on their sequel to Gretzky. Now, however, Acclaim has stepped up to challenge Gretzky's dominance with NHL Breakaway '98. Hopefully, this will cause developers (present and future) to push their game developing skills to the limit.

Let's take a look at what Breakaway has to offer. In addition to the NHL licenses (that any good hockey game should have), Breakaway features several management capabilities. Creating a player is only the tip of the iceberg. There is also the option of drafting and developing players out of the amateur ranks, as well as acquiring free agents and trading multiple players on your existing roster. Breakaway '98 possesses complete NHL player rosters (even the scrubs). Furthermore, if a player gets hurt, you can choose how you want to rehabilitate him with different kinds of physical therapy. And finally, as in the PlayStation version, you can also hire and fire coaches.

Outside of team management options, Breakaway '98 features momentum-based checking that causes players to lose their helmets and sticks when a powerful hit is delivered. When you unload the big cross-check on your opponent, you might find that one referee is more likely to call the penalty because of varying tolerances for infractions. Plus, there is added control with an icon-based passing system.

Acclaim's Breakaway should be out by the twentieth of this month and hopefully we will see EA release a version of NHL to add to the mix. If this happens then we should see better performances out of each hockey game and overall better sports titles for the N64.

Some refs are a whistle-happy.

GOAL SCORED

The wind-up.

Nice view.

Opportunity knocks.
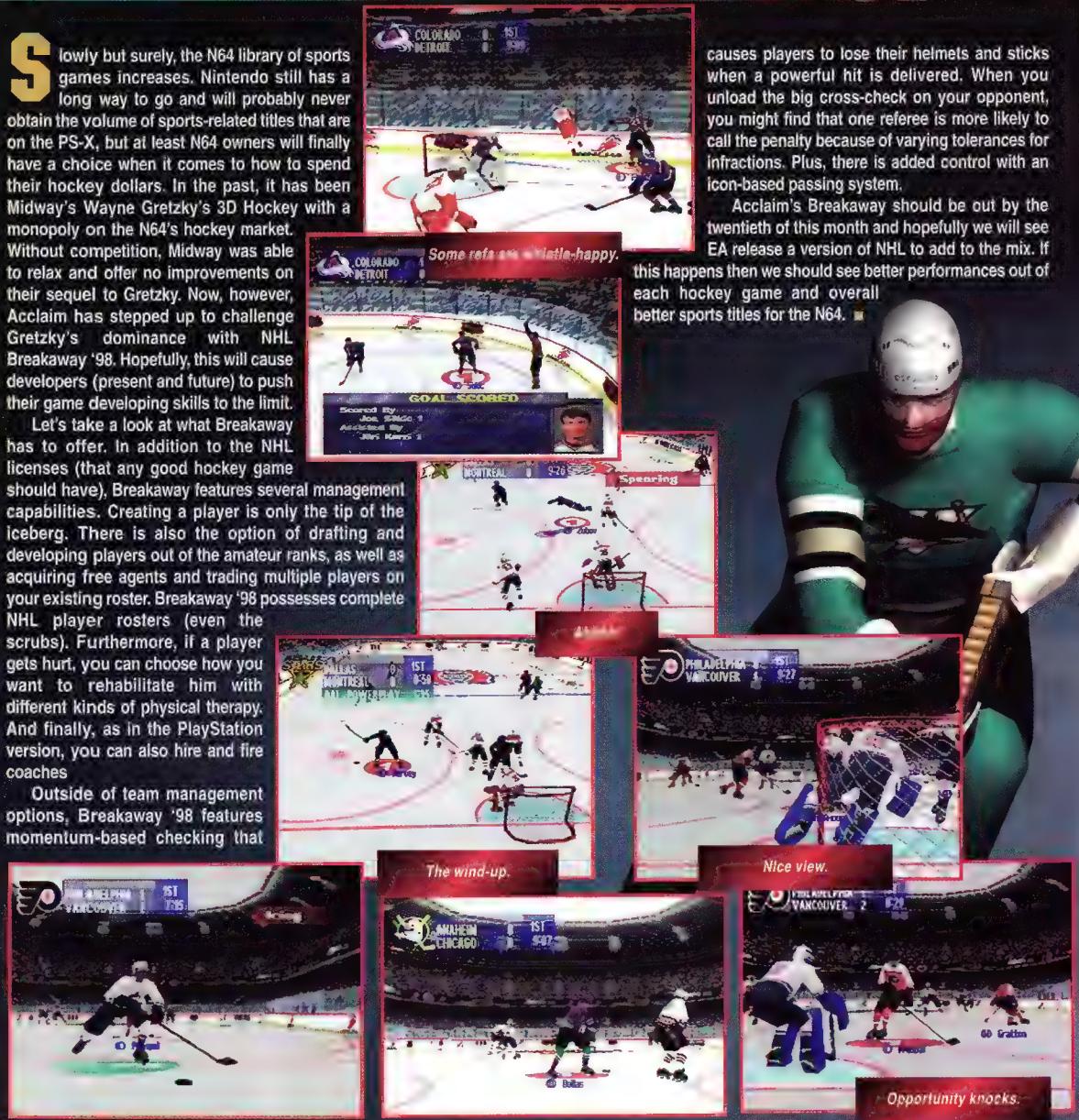
Fighter Destiny

Nintendo Scores a Fighter

Good fighting games may be hard to come by on the N64, but with titles like Mace: The Dark Age and now Fighter's Destiny, things are looking up for N64 owners. You begin with nine characters of different nationalities ranging from a plump Persian in Aladdin garb to a Frenchman with a bright colored clown suit, each with their own unique moves. The characters battle it out in duels that use a point system where players try to be the first to gain seven points through a ring out, judge's decision, throw down, counter, knock down, or special move. In the default setting, a judge's decision is worth one point and finishing off an opponent with a special move is worth four. However, the point settings can be changed at the option menu so that a judge's decision can score four points and a special move one point, etc.

Throws and counters play a big part in the combat of Fighter's Destiny. Not only are they an effective way to score points, but they can also be used to turn the tide of a contest. The situation may look bleak when your opponent is kicking your butt into next week, but you still have a chance to score the next points. With a counter move you can take out an adversary by timing your strike before your opponent's next crushing blow is delivered. Or, if you get close enough, you can execute a throw down for

Stop! In the name of love...

Leap frog.

That's a Special.

two points, but caution must be used because throw downs can easily be reversed. Another way to change momentum comes during an apparent ring out. While hanging onto the edge of the ring you can grab your opponent's leg and pull them out of the ring for a throw down.

There are five modes to Fighter's Destiny including the Vs. Com, Vs. Battle, and Training modes, as well as the Master Challenge and Record Attack modes. The Master mode contains twelve battles against either the Master or the Joker. Who you face is largely left up to chance, but beating this mode is all skill. The Master mode allows you to learn eight new moves for each of the playable characters by beating the Master in eight separate battles. But interspersed within these Master battles are duels against the Joker. The pressure is on, because one loss to the Joker will cause you to lose all the moves learned to that point. The Record Attack mode, on the other hand, contains three contests: Rodeo, Survival, and Fastest. The Rodeo contest is the most notable as you fight a cow while trying to stay in the ring for as long as possible.

The five modes and scoring system, along with an option-heavy front end, are just a few of the things that make Fighter's Destiny a great addition to the N64's fighting line-up.
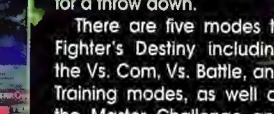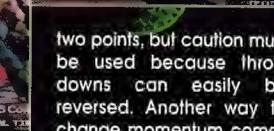
▶ THE BOTTOM LINE 8

PAUL, THE GAME PROFESSOR

Concept:	9
Graphics:	8
Sound:	7.5
Playability:	9
Entertainment:	8.5
OVERALL:	**8.5**

"Initially, this game is not too spectacular. The characters are fairly plain and the polygons aren't too polished. But with some crazy ring out maneuvers, interesting special moves, and a point system reminiscent of the classic Karate Champ, you can easily look past the graphics. A little Tekken here and a little Zero Divide there, Fighter's Destiny will challenge even the most seasoned of fighters. Plus, it has enough humor to entertain fighters of any skill level."

REINER, THE RAGING GAMER

Concept:	8.5
Graphics:	7
Sound:	6.25
Playability:	8
Entertainment:	4.5
OVERALL:	**6.5**

"Fighter's Destiny is incredibly inventive and pushes the boundary of what a fighter can and should be, but it is also rather quick at becoming boring. The fighting mechanics are a lot like Virtua Fighter and Tekken, which is nice, but the animation is less than desirable and somewhat choppy. The true fun in this game is captured and lost after the first hour of play. The scoring system is a drastic change from what we are accustomed to in modern day fighters, but unfortunately, a more complete package is needed to make this game truly live."

JON, THE GREEDY GAMER

Concept:	9
Graphics:	8.75
Sound:	8.25
Playability:	8.75
Entertainment:	8
OVERALL:	**8.75**

"Fighter's Destiny is hands-down the best fighter for N64. Mace, Dark Rift, War Gods, KI, MKT, they're all pretty much the same bag, but not Fighter's Destiny. The point structure for matches adds tons of strategy – if you're four points down, you have to play for the Special, but if you only need a point, a quick toss will do. The computer is intelligent as well, and plays the points system to perfection. The N64 is weak in the fighting department, but this game helps out a lot. It's not the Namco or Capcom fighter we're waiting for, but in a pinch, it performs nicely."

IN THE ZONE '98

N64's First 5-On-5 Hardwood Contest

- **Size:** 64 Megabit
- **Style:** 1 to 4-Player Basketball
- **Special Features:** NBA License; 3 Difficulty Levels; Adjustable Quarter Lengths; Rumble & Controller Pak Compatible; 4 Modes; Create Player
- **Created by:** Konami Computer Entertainment Osaka for Konami Sports
- **Available:** Now for Nintendo 64

Konami has developed NBA In The Zone '98 for both the PlayStation and the N64. However, the PS-X version of Zone '98 was created by Konami's Tokyo development house, while the N64 version was developed by their Osaka team. As a result, each game has its own unique look and feel. In fact, if you didn't know it, you probably wouldn't even guess they were made by the same company.

Like any respectable pro basketball game, Zone '98 will have the NBA license with official teams and actual NBA players to choose from, except, of course, Michael Jordan. Players can also choose from four different modes. For single games, players can select Exhibition or All-Star games. If you desire a bigger commitment, choose either the Play-Off or Season mode. In addition, Zone has other features like ten camera views, player stamina, and ten different rules – like the 3-second violation and fouling out – that can be turned off or adjusted.

The early version of Zone that we saw for the N64 definitely has potential, but at this point seems to have its work cut out for it. For instance, on offense, the computer often ignores a clear path to the basket and usually either passes the ball back out to the perimeter or simply gives the defense enough time to recover. Unfortunately, on the most difficult setting, the offense seems to counter this by selecting one individual to hit an excessive number of 3-point shots even with a defender right in his face. For example, in one game, Mugsy Bogues was on fire from behind the arc and ended up scoring 29 points. Excuse me, Mugsy Bogues? It should have at least been Glen Rice. Hopefully, Konami will rebound and make this a great 5-on-5 contest.

ROBOTRON 64

Wave After Wave of Insanity

- **Size:** 64 Megabit
- **Style:** 1-Player Shooter
- **Special Features:** 200 Waves; 2 Bosses; Power-Ups; 10 Bonus Games; Dual Controller Play
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low
- **Created by:** Player 1 for Crave
- **Available:** Now for Nintendo 64

Robotron 64 is another classic title upgraded to 3D. Recently, we've seen other memories receive the upgrade treatment, including Frogger, Xevious, and Pitfall. The results are often a mixed bag, and Robotron 64 is no exception.

Like any upgrade, power-ups are included. In the case of Robotron, these include multi-directional shots, flame throwers, shields, and 1-ups. The original Robotron enemies have been upgraded as well. Most enemies come in four different classes. The grunts are still easy, but the brains and tanks get really nasty in the upper waves.

The boards incorporate some new hazards. Starting at about wave 50, electric shock posts appear. When the posts become active, they create an energy field that cannot be crossed. There are also escape gates and deflectors that carom your shots around the board. Boards change every ten waves, and there are also bonus waves similar to those in Galaga. Robotron 64 also features two bosses (at waves 100 and 200).

Control is laid out well with the analog joystick or d-pad devoted to movement and the c-buttons devoted to directional firing. Players can also hold two controllers at once, where one analog stick is used to move, the other to fire. Unfortunately, the only two-player mode is the old "standoff" of players.

If you're interested in the classic, you should give Robotron a look. But as with most nostalgia, this 64-bit upgrade can't top the original in terms of gameplay. In short, it's a niche title that will appeal to only a small core of gamers.

The gold enemies float above you then drop.

The later boards get very small.

Shock posts are tough.

The close camera is pretty much worthless.

Andy, The Game Hombre
"Certainly not the greatest N64 game of all time, but it's a pretty good Robotron. Classics junkies may love this title, but most people will not."

Paul, The Game Professor
"If you can still remember playing Robotron in the arcades, you should buy this game. Nothing more."

Jon, The Greedy Gamer
"I worship the classics but Robotron was better left alone. I'd play the original all day long, but I put Robotron 64 down after a few hours. Nothing more than a rental."

Reiner, The Raging Gamer
"Yeah, I'm a fan of the original, but this sorry excuse for rejuvenation just doesn't work. In fact, it doesn't sparkle at all. Rent it, beat it, but don't spend over five dollars on this bad egg."

	Andy	Paul	Jon	Reiner
Concept:	7	4	2	4.75
Graphics:	8.5	3	7.25	2.75
Sound:	8	7.75	8	3.5
Playability:	8.5	8	7.5	3.25
Entertainment:	7	5	8	1
Overall:	8.25	5.5	7.25	3.25

▶ **THE BOTTOM LINE** **5.5**

FIFA
ROAD TO WORLD CUP 98

The Toughest Road on Earth

- **Size:** 64 Megabit
- **Style:** 1 to 4-Player Soccer
- **Special Features:** International and Club Teams; World Cup Qualifying and Tournament Round Structure; Club Seasons; Player Edit and Transfer; Team Edit; 3 Difficulty Levels; Control Non-Ball Handler; Automatic Crosses Option; New and Improved Pass Interface; Training Mode; Indoor Matches
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High
- **Created by:** EA Sports
- **Available:** Now for Nintendo 64

The World Cup is the grandest of all events, encompassing a grueling four year process of qualification and finals play. EA Sports' newest FIFA has the full World Cup License, and does a good job of faking the professional club licenses for eleven different nations. In short, this World Cup license is perhaps the largest, most important license available in sports gaming.

But aside from the license, there is the issue of gameplay. Road to World Cup 98 (RTWC 98) is much better than last year's FIFA. EA retained the patented FIFA passing system, but it is easier to execute 'through passes' and long lobs this year. The give-and-go is easier as well – one button automatically leaves control with a non-ball carrier.

Defense is well done, and switching to your men is quick and (usually) precise. Heading can be either CPU assisted or left up to the player, and shot targeting can be assigned to the CPU as well. An array of team management features are available for fine-tuning each club. Some of the more advanced features include man-to-man assignments, toggling aggression levels, and designating kick takers. RTWC 98 also includes a player and team edit, as well as player transfer options.

Comparisons to Konami's ISS 64 are inevitable. Konami's game is faster-paced, with computer assisted passing and much smoother animation. But ISS also has that problem with switching defenders, and lacks any license at all. It's your pick, but if you're a fan of the soccer sim, RTWC 98 is most likely the game for you.

Andy, The Game Hombre
"While this FIFA offering is better than last year's (with better graphics and through passing), I still don't think it's as good as ISS 64 (except for the fact that it has real teams)."

Paul, The Game Professor
"EA Sports obviously took a long look at ISS 64 and made some excellent improvements to this game. The sheer amount of teams will impress the hard-core soccer fan, but the control is still somewhat cumbersome."

Jon, The Greedy Gamer
"RTWC 98 is much better than last year's FIFA, but as for action, I still prefer Konami's ISS 64. If you're a sim fan, RTWC 98's license will blow you away, and the World Cup tourney is awesome, but ISS 64's gameplay still rules."

Reiner, The Raging Gamer
"The bottom line is this: the game is greatly improved, but the goalies have somehow become ridiculously stupid. Oops! I forgot. I was supposed to stop that! It's a good multiplayer game but not much more. Stick with Konami's ISS 64."

	Andy	Paul	Jon	Reiner
Concept:	8	8.5	8.75	7
Graphics:	9.25	8.5	8.25	7.25
Sound:	8	8.5	8.5	7
Playability:	8	7.75	8.5	6.25
Entertainment:	8	8	8	6
Overall:	8	8.5	8.5	6.75

▶ **THE BOTTOM LINE** **8**

Blade & Barrel Action
WILD Choppers

- **Size:** 64 Megabit
- **Style:** 1 Player Mission-Based Shooter
- **Special Features:** 8 Different Helicopter Pilots; Rumble and Controller Pak Compatible; Multiple Weapon Configurations; Earn Cash For Upgrades
- **Created by:** Seta
- **Available:** Now in Japan For Nintendo 64 (U.S. Release Pending)

BEAT 'EM DOWN! BE WILD MAN! That was the first thing we saw when looking at the back of the box of Wild Choppers for the Nintendo 64. After sitting back and playing the game for a while, we have a few tidbits to tell you about this semi-impressive game. Wild Choppers is a mission-based shooter where you have to go around and destroy certain targets and finish designated objectives to move on to the next level. It's a lot like the Strike Series from EA (but not quite as good). There are some cool features, such as the eight different choppers to choose from, each with a particular pilot.

As far as control goes, this game is not up to par. We could not find a way to configure our own button layout, which would not be a big deal, if the default layout was not so awkward. Also, we found that the control is a little sluggish, and the targeting system was a little off. You have to move the target you are trying to shoot, which is very tricky to do. The choppers have very little maneuverability and most times you are a sitting duck for a stray missile.

While Seta has no plans to release the game in the United States, GT Interactive is considering porting it under the title Blade & Barrel. With a little help this game could be a decent title, and it should help fill an empty gap in the 64's growing library. We'll keep you posted as more news develops.

GEX
ENTER THE GECKO

THE MASTER OF DISGUISE

Crystal Dynamics and Midway Home Entertainment are expecting Gex: Enter the Gecko to be the king of PlayStation platformers in '98. For the lizard with the most to attain this status he must conquer 3D space, a feat not yet perfected by a platformer on the PlayStation. As we view each new version of the game, it continually makes leaps and strides for the better, but with the release date quickly approaching, will Crystal D have the time to make Gex into one of the elite platforming titles?

All of the characters in this long-awaited sequel were created using a single mesh and an enclosed skeleton. Doing this allowed Crystal to create low polygon counts in the characters. Thus, Gex and his enemies have fluid animation, but they don't run into the classic 3D bug where the polygons tear and bend. Crystal D has also employed real-time lighting techniques that produce spectacular effects. For example, pools of water reflect on ceilings, and TV's emanate throughout the levels. Plus, Gex performs real-time lip-synching to accompany Dana Gould's sarcastic slurs. With all of this in place, Enter the Gecko has a fantastic look.

With each new TV world Gex enters, his costume will change to accommodate the scenario. You'll see him disguised as James Bond, Indiana Jones, Godzilla, Gilligan, Daffy Duck, Bugs Bunny, a Stormtrooper (complete with a Lightsaber!!!) and Will Robinson. Gex also wears caveman, kung-fu, and police garb.

There are problems though. For one, the game is experiencing camera difficulties. Four different view options have been added (manual, follow, Gex cam, and chase), but with the large environments, glitches occur when the camera changes angles or zooms. Another factor is the slow down. With texture maps on every surface, lighting effects dancing around the rooms, and large objects moving about, the game begins to chug. If Crystal can conquer these gremlins currently plaguing their wonder project, then Gex will more than likely shine. Let's hope this game can make the grade. We don't need to bury another platform star (sorry Bubsy).
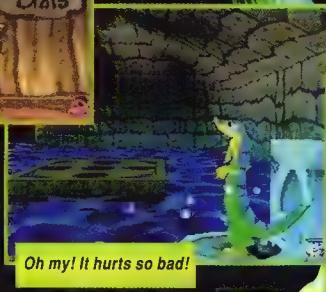
He can climb on walls.

You asked for it bub, you were illegally parked.

Hmmm...which one?

Oh my! It hurts so bad!

Gex must kill little human homes!

007 Gex

Will Robinson Gex

Caveman Gex

Stormtrooper Gex

Policeman Gex

Gilligan Gex

Indiana Jones Gex

Naked Gex
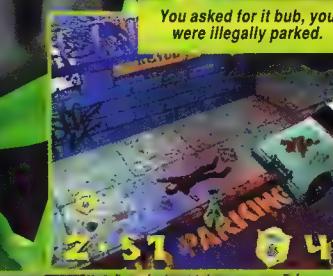
Roar features some nice effects.
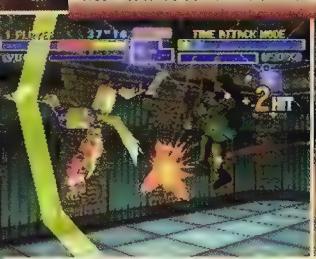
Gado is king of this domain!

Kid Mode is one of the many combat options.

Watership Down relived.

BLOODY ROAR

Hyper Beast Duel

Pure Gaming Vengeance
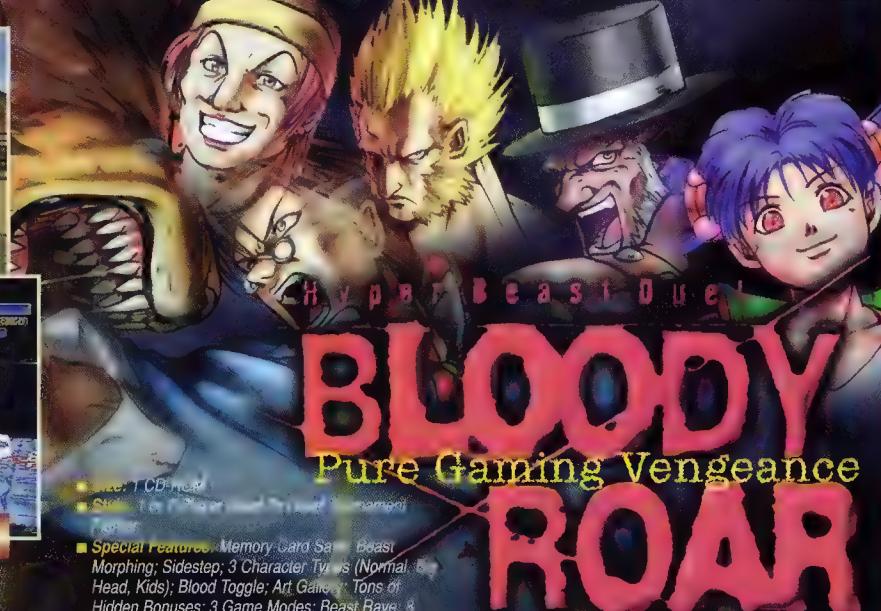
- **Size:** 1 CD-ROM
- **Style:** 1 or 2 Player Head-to-Head (Versus) Fighting
- **Special Features:** Memory Card Save; Beast Morphing; Sidestep; 3 Character Types (Normal, Big Head, Kids); Blood Toggle; Art Gallery; Tons of Hidden Bonuses; 3 Game Modes; Beast Rave; 8 Characters (With More Hidden)
- **Created by:** Hudson for Sony Computer Entertainment America
- **Available:** February for Sony PlayStation

In Bloody Roar, vengeance comes in many shapes and forms. Most fighters allow gamers to seek retribution by mastering techniques and skills. On the other hand, to achieve vengeance in Bloody Roar, you must unlock an alternate personality that possesses more power and aggression than you ever thought possible. This innovative tactic is available for all eight characters featured in this title. With the press of a button, your human character morphs into a hideous (or sometimes cute) beast with new moves, combos, and special abilities.

Of course, there are limitations to using a beast. After all, how entertaining would it be if both characters stayed altered for the entire match? To successfully capture the essence of the beast you will need to monitor and learn how to incorporate the Beast Meter into your modern day fighting skills. The Beast Meter fills like any other fighting game special meter, but it's also a little different. It can be used whenever the beast option is lit, but if you wait and let the Meter grow, you will have more time to use your beast. By quickly pressing the morph button when the match starts, you'll be limited to a fairly short run as the beast. But if you wait, you could possibly fight all of round two as the hulking mutation, and use the Rave option (which is also initiated by a button press).

Rave doesn't do much more than speed up your combatant's skills. It's basically a turbo mode that allows for quick combo and special move inputs. The beasts in the game are all different. One character morphs into a rabbit, another a tiger, and there's also a fox, boar, wolf, mole, and gorilla.

Bloody Roar's combat interface is very similar to Tekken and Virtua Fighter. We know you've heard this before, but this interface is too close to these games not to mention. The strange thing is that attacking is based on only two buttons. The other buttons are morphing, Rave, and 3D evade. Specials and combos are based on directional presses, and throws are accessed through dual button presses.

Graphically, this title will not disappoint. The effects are nice, the animation is very smooth, and the character designs are unique and in the manga vein. There are tons of play modes to tackle, and secrets to find. ■
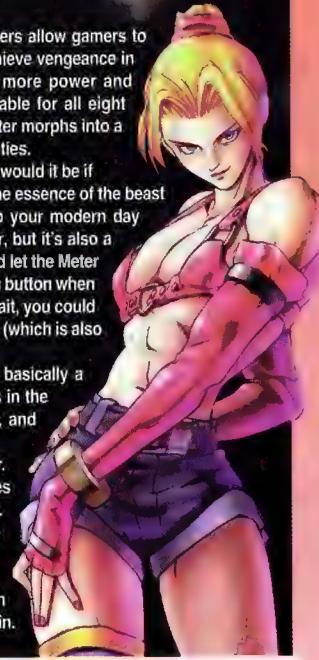
The ape man gets a grip on a measly human.

Pow! Pow! Power!

CARDINAL SYN

A CONGLOMERATE OF PAIN... POWER...AND DECAPITATIONS

Special moves are highlighted with awesome effects.

Come back and fight, you coward.

- **Size:** 1 CD-ROM
- **Style:** 1 or 2-Player Head-To-Head Tournament Fighter
- **Special Features:** Analog Compatible; Memory Card Save; 8 Characters (With More Hidden); Block Meter; 5 Game Modes; Dismemberment Moves (Fatalities); Special Items; Magic Powers; Stun Throws and Blocks (Parry Moves)
- **Created by:** Kronos Digital Entertainment/Sony Interactive Studios for Sony Computer Entertainment America
- **Available:** February for Sony PlayStation

When we first had a chance to rack up some serious game hours on Cardinal Syn last issue we noticed one big flaw – it's a medieval fighter without any kind of macabre violence. Sure this may be bullish of us to say since there is quite a lot of blood, but when the characters wield frightfully large and dangerously sharp weapons like a sword or an axe, someone is bound to lose a limb. Well, the fine folks at Sony and Kronos also noticed this, and have implemented finishing moves into this sinful experience in gaming.

These moves, which are suitably entitled Dismemberments, hack and dice opponents into tiny little piles of raw meat. The Dismemberments are nothing like Mortal Kombat's Fatalities (except for the gore), and are based on more of a combo structure than a solitary move. If you can pull one off, then you're in for a real treat. It's quite an awesome spectacle to watch someone chop off an opponent's head, and then watch the headless body fall to the ground with blood squirting everywhere, soaking in a large puddle of innards. Nasty!

Other improvements to Syn have also surfaced. The computer is a much smarter and tougher opponent, the sound has been enhanced, the environments have been cleaned up, and Stun moves have been implemented. The Stuns (blocks and throws) act in the same manner as the parries in Soul Blade – you can lock up and toss an enemy out of the way. The bonuses to these moves are quite clear. Spinning the opponent so his/her back faces you opens up a great attacking window, and you can also chuck an opponent into an environmental hazard, like a pool of acid or a ferocious inferno. Doing this takes off a fair amount of damage, but some of the hazards continually tick points off of the characters' health bar until they find a potion to cure themselves.

All of the potions and power-ups are still intact and play the same role in combat. Finding all of the hidden items on a level will help immensely when you encounter the huge dragon boss Kron. All of the Magic potions can be stored from fight to fight, and then unlocked and unleashed against Kron. This boss is tough, and while you tick away at his life bar, he'll suck yours down in no time.

Cardinal Syn is looking very impressive right now. It will be out soon, and we may not get our review out to you before it launches. Sony has a few bugs to fix and some balancing to do, but otherwise it appears as though it is going to be a bloody good time. Definitely check it out if you like Soul Blade, WeaponLord, or Tekken.

Impaled by the environment.

Finkster's Dismemberment is almost too much to handle.

Using a Stun Block opens up a great attack window.

Moloch performs one of many juggle combos.

Off with her head!

During combos, special moves can be implemented to create a unique string of hits.

TEKKEN 3

JIN WINS!

ROUND 1
READY?

GAME OVER
K.O.

WINS!

THE IRON FIST HAS RETURNED

- **Size:** 1 CD–ROM
- **Style:** 1 or 2-Player Head-To-Head Tournament Fighter
- **Special Features:** All The Fighters From The Arcade; Arcade, Practice, Survival, and Vs. Modes; Unblockable Specials
- **Created by:** Namco
- **Available:** March/April for Sony PlayStation

In the world of 3D fighters, it can be argued that there is only one leader. The Tekken series is the embodiment of what many companies entering into the creation of a new fighter hope to attain. The game revolutionized how we see fighters (and games) in general. Tekken proved to everyone that 3D was here to stay, and could be put into any genre of game to create the same passion and fervor that two-dimensional games enjoyed before it.

Now, Tekken 3 is coming to the PlayStation, and it's not going to need any new hardware attachments (as many soothsayers had predicted). But it is going to push the PlayStation to the limit, bringing all the 3D backgrounds and characters, in all their glory, to your home. So all of those who forgot how much fun the series is will remember once again.

Currently, specific information on the PlayStation version is scarce, as Namco is closely guarding it (only generic screen shots could be obtained). Namco did state, however, that the game would include all the characters from the arcade, as well as many of the options that were found in the home version of Tekken 2.

Like the arcade, the story is once again centered around Heihachi Mishima, father of Kazuya Mishima. Heihachi is 15 years older, and has regained control of the Mishima Corporation. He has a grandson, Jin Kazama (son of Kazuya Mishima and Jun Kazama). The story then takes a real Mortal Kombat-esque twist, as fighters all over the world are disappearing, plucked up by a mysterious "fighting god." The stage is now set for the Tournament to begin...

New additions to the Tekken engine include the ability to sidestep, as well as longer and more variant chain combos. Many of the fighters are new, but there are also repeat performances, as well as other fighters very similar to previous favorites. Tekken fans will be as excited as ever and newbies will get their first taste of the phenomenon known as Tekken when this game hits the shelves in 1998.

EINHÄNDER

A Touch Of Square Magic

- **Size:** 1 CD-ROM
- **Style:** 1-Player Shooter
- **Special Features:** Stats Ranking; Three Vehicles To Choose From; Multiple Weapon Options
- **Created by:** Square USA for Square Soft
- **Available:** Now in Japan for Sony PlayStation U.S. Release Pending

A s developers become more accustomed to the powers of 3D technology, they are able to focus their creative talents on the gameplay elements of both new and old genres (which some had thought to be fully exhausted). This is especially true of the shooter category, a style of game that has not seen much success since the release of the current systems. Enter Square and their new entry, Einhander. Taking place in the future, the story involves a war between the moon and Earth. You are a renegade fighter ship called Einhander from the moon, bound for Earth to take out its defenses. As can be expected, this is not an easy task.

Gameplay is typical shooter fare, except for a few strategic differences. Speed can be controlled with the touch of a button, and special weapons can be mounted in different places to give different ranges. Another cool aspect of Einhander is that instead of just trying to blow enemies to bits, particular areas are weaker than others. Attack these areas for an easier kill or to dislodge their weapon and use it against them.

So far, Sony hasn't announced whether or not they will pick it up for a Stateside release, but since they have the first right of refusal, there's a chance they might.

Cinemas take you from level to level.

Dodge the sides of the huge ship.

So how come his weapons are so much bigger?

This is one big nasty boss.

Shoot the Hovercrafts for power-ups.

Beware of the flames. They hurt.

Revisiting the Eternal Struggle Of Good Against Evil

BREATH OF FIRE

- **Size:** 1 CD-ROM
- **Style:** 1-Player Role-Playing Game
- **Special Features:** 3D Rotation; Apprenticeship; Genetic Splicing; Fishing and Hunting; Entertaining Storyline; Memory Card Required
- **Created By:** Capcom
- **Available:** March for Sony PlayStation

Centuries of time have passed since the Goddess and the Dragons battled for the future of the Earth. The tale was forgotten until the day a live dragon was found in an old mine...and the epic RPG Breath of Fire returns.

This new installment keeps the fundamentals of the series alive, but some cool changes have occurred during the jump to the 32-bit platform. The terrain is constructed of 3D wireframes, allowing for camera rotation and excellent effects. Spells are also done in 3D. Characters are still 2D, but with lots of animations and sound effects to enhance their personalities each takes on a whole new life. The extras that are a staple of Breath of Fire – fishing and hunting – are also improved, with the fishing offering gameplay similar to the NES classic – Black Bass.

Other new features include the ability to become an apprentice to multiple masters, learning special skills, and getting bonus point awards at each level-up. There is also the ability for certain characters to pick up gene crystals and then mix them together to morph into new creatures or attain new skills or bonuses.

The storyline is constructed well (taking into account that the basis for the story is the same as the other Breath of Fires), the subplots are interesting, and the characters have a lot of personality. While the first few minutes of the game drag, it does pick up quickly and gets you hooked. Lots of twists and turns send the plot in directions that aren't quite expected. RPG fans will be very excited with this one when it hits stores. Look for a final review of Breath Of Fire III soon.

I leave you kids alone for two minutes and look what happens!

Time to do a little fishin'.

Light up the enemy with a dose of dragon love.

Time for blast off!

I wonder what's in the diary?

These guys need to cool off a bit.

Use this to get away from bad guys.

I think he found something...

MegaMan NEO

Good dog. Now, jump and kill!

Yer aim is a little off, bub.

- **Size:** 1 CD-ROM
- **Style:** 1-Player Action/Adventure
- **Special Features:** Real-Time Cut-Scenes; Weapon and Armor Enhancements; Gigantic Towns and Worlds With Character Interaction and Item Shops; Mega Man Cam; Auto-Targeting; Tons of Moves Including Evasive Rolling, Ledge Hanging, Walking, Strafing, and Kicking; Body Enhancements Including Mega-Jump and Hyper Skating; Minimal Loading Times.
- **Created by:** Capcom
- **Available:** April for Sony PlayStation

The story is a good one. Look out for the yellow Lego men.

Hi! I'm Mega Man! Hear any good chat lately?

Bullets cannot hurt Mega Man! Er...maybe they can.

シュウイン池の サブゲート　　　クローサーの森の サブゲート
地下遺跡のゲート1　　　地下遺跡のゲート3
地下遺跡のゲート2
カードンの森の サブゲート

The world is huge.

SPLASH MINE
ATTACK
ENERGY
RANGE
RAPID
SPECIAL

Technologies can be researched to create new powers.

Mega Man has been 2D for over ten years and, with the PlayStation releases of 8 and X4, it appeared as though he would stay flat forever. Then, out of the blue, Capcom did something quite surprising. They created a three-dimensional Street Fighter (which was an event that no one ever thought would happen). Well this year we have yet another surprise – Mega Man is also moving to the 3D realm, but hopefully this new move doesn't mean that the 2D shooters will be lost. In Street Fighter's case, Capcom is still releasing 2D versions, and it would only make sense that they would continue the immensely popular 2D Mega Man line as well.

For those who know the ins and outs of Mega Man, don't expect the same game. In fact, don't expect anything close. Mega Man Neo is designed quite differently than any other release. The enemies have all changed and you will never encounter end bosses or obtain new weapons from any enemy. This new leap into 3D space for the man in blue offers up a new kind of quest with new dangers and bonuses.

For starters, Neo doesn't feature any kind of level structure. An entire world is presented to the player to explore. At any given point during gameplay you'll be able to exercise this option. From the get go you can run to the other side of the world and check out the surroundings. Here's the kicker though. If you talk to a certain person or stumble upon a certain location, an event will take place. These events lead in with a real-time cut-scene conveying some kind of story or plot point. From here you'll usually enter a hostile scenario where combat becomes the focus.

While exploring the land, Mega Man cannot attack. He has certain abilities granted to him like running, walking, strafing, ledge climbing, and talking. The most aggressive action he can use at these times is a kick. With either leg, Mega Man can boot dogs, cats, and garbage cans for entertainment purposes only. All of the action and rewards come from combat. Sure there are item shops where new enhancements and weapons can be purchased, but only through combat will you earn enough money for one of these new gadgets.

The combat is somewhat like that in the originals, but now the ability to move in 3D space becomes a factor. Dodging enemy fire is much more complicated. Of course, you could use the standard maneuver of jumping over enemy fire, but there are other techniques that you can benefit from. Evasive rolls, stealth gadgets, mega-jumps, and hyper-skating allow for easy evasion and better attack placement. Most of the enemies can be taken down by basic fire, but some require different weapons to take them out.

Neo doesn't really reach the pinnacle of having huge multi-tiered levels like Tomb Raider, but the action is always on your heels and you barely have time to breathe. The story is complex (there are tons of characters to interact with), and the graphic presentation is unique and flashy. The look of the game isn't as sharp as the original Mega Mans, but the animation and effects are much better. The same manga-style is used, but now it has a third dimension.

Neo will be coming out soon, and once again, Capcom has a potential winner on their hands. Neo could very well be the high-octane Mario killer that PlayStation gamers have been craving for years.

Now that you're down tick-boy, I'm gonna stomp you dead.
Head-to-head.
He's as resourceful as a ninja.
Don't panic...just run!
Gaahhh!!!
Bad dog. Now, play dead.

FINAL FANTASY TACTICS

- **Size:** 1 CD-ROM
- **Style:** 1-Player Strategy Role-Playing Game
- **Special Features:** Over 17 Different Character Classes; Over 20 Different Enemies; Tutorial; Odd Job Side Quests; Tons of Items and Weapons
- **Replay Value:** High
- **Created by:** Square Soft for Sony Computer Entertainment America
- **Available:** Now for Sony PlayStation

▶ **THE BOTTOM LINE 8.75**

Yes! Eat my shorts!

Shiva comes into the room like a cold wind

The engineer skill allows you to shoot firearms

As you progress in strength your attacks become more and more spectacular!

The Most Complicated Game You'll Ever Love

Like the name implies, Final Fantasy Tactics is a strategy game set in the Final Fantasy universe. Unlike the classic RPGs in the series (where the game revolves around gaining experience and solving puzzles), Final Fantasy Tactics is all about RPG turn-based action (where the story is opened to you after you complete each strategic battle).

During your quest you are in charge of an army of up to 16 characters that you create and lead down a career path. Some characters will be magic-users, others fighters, but to complete the quest you'll need a perfect mix of both. There are close to 20 classes (or jobs as they are called in the game) that your characters can be. From Summoner to Ninja, each job gives the player different attributes and skills for battle. For example, you'll need a priest in your party to heal, a knight for battle, a wizard for magic, and an archer for long-range attacks.

Compared to Vandal Hearts or Shining Force (the closest thing American gamers have seen to this title), FF Tactics' interface is confusing. But Tactics is one of those games that if you stick to it, it goes from being "confusing" to "the greatest interface of all-time."

All the spells, enemies, and items are straight from any Final Fantasy you've played before. Summon Ramuh to bring the wrath of the gods about your enemies, use Phoenix Down to revive your troops, even buy items with the standard Gil.

The line in the sand is drawn.

Tactics uses all the classic Final Fantasy items and spells.

While strategy RPGs aren't for everyone, this game is one of the best and should be first on any RPGers' wish list. Tactics' control will frustrate at first, but quickly mesmerize. Then the story of the common man versus the aristocracy will capture your heart and leave you pondering the wonders of the Zodiac Brave Story late at night. And finally, Tactics will take your time, as there is no easy road to perfecting the ways of war.

ANDY, THE GAME HOMBRE

Concept:	9.5
Graphics:	9
Sound:	8
Playability:	9
Entertainment:	9.5

OVERALL: 9

"After a day of figuring out this game's controls and learning character movements, Final Fantasy Tactics hooked me in a way like few games do. The story is eloquent, the battle is fierce, and the sheer number of items and powers that your characters can obtain is almost overwhelming. I just had to unlock every item, learn every spell, and crush every enemy. If you thought FF VII was too hard, this game isn't for you, but if you're a gamer looking for a challenge and lots of game time, Tactics is the way go. It could have beat FF VII if it had two discs of rendered movies"

JON, THE GREEDY GAMER

Concept:	9.25
Graphics:	7
Sound:	8
Playability:	9.25
Entertainment:	8.25

OVERALL: 8.25

"This is a difficult game to score. On the one hand, it is ingeniously conceived, and the character and item menus are the most complex I've ever seen. However, most gamers will put this title down after the first five or six battles. Until you master the concept of changing jobs and learning abilities, the game seems overwhelming. After that, it's smoother sailing (relatively speaking). If you're hard-core into strategy, I recommend putting time into FF Tactics. Otherwise, you can sample a severely watered-down version of Tactics in Konami's Vandal Hearts."

REINER, THE RAGING GAMER

Concept:	9.5
Graphics:	8
Sound:	8
Playability:	9.5
Entertainment:	9

OVERALL: 9.25

"Tactics is not a title for the gaming masses. It speaks a different language that most gamers won't understand. The wicked combat chemistry and complexity of the menus and options will confuse most, even those who flew through FF VII and Vandal Hearts. This is one of the most complex and difficult games around that seriously tests your patience on every move. If you think you can handle it, then I recommend this title. It's an inventive game that for once pushes gamers to really use their brains. It also ties into FF VII by featuring Cloud and most of the Summon Spells."

WCW NITRO

It's Monday Night, Every Night

- **Size:** 1 CD-ROM
- **Style:** 1 or 2-Player Wrestling
- **Special Features:** 64 Wrestlers; The Match, Vs... and Exhibition Modes; Taunts; Run-In Characters; Match Commentary; FMV Endings; Special Event Backdrops; Special Moves for Each Wrestler; Wrestle as Mean Gene Okerlund; Tag Team or Singles Matches; Three Difficulty Levels; Memory Card Save
- **Replay Value:** Average
- **Created by:** Inland Productions for THQ
- **Available:** Now for Sony PlayStation

▶ **THE BOTTOM LINE** 6.75

M ondays usually suck. You lay in bed thinking about the long, tortuous week ahead...five straight days of the same old schlock. But if you're a wrestling fan, Monday means something very special. It means Monday Nitro, the most explosive, entertaining, and controversial weekly event in all of WCW. There's usually a huge match-up, half of the bouts end in a brawl, and Zybisco, the Brain, and even Mean Gene himself always stir up some kind of hornet's nest.

What we, the united fans of wrestling, really wanted this Christmas was a game that could capture the spontaneity, the pomp and flair, and the all-out craziness that is Monday Nitro. THQ heard our cries, and as appeasement, they offer WCW Nitro for the Sony PlayStation. The graphics are photo-realistic, the character select screen includes rants, and each wrestler is robed in authentic garb. The Nitro stage and backdrop, the live action TV screen, and butt-kickin' music round out the game's excellent attention to detail. Plus, WCW Nitro includes special event backdrops including Fall Brawl, American Bash, and Halloween Havoc. Mean Gene even offers a few comments, and during the bouts, moves are called out by name.

For those who enjoyed WCW: World Tour, be forewarned, WCW Nitro is a completely different game. The spirit meter is now a standard energy bar, there are very few submission holds, there is no working over limbs and joints, and pinning is much, much easier. Nitro instead focuses on fast-paced throws, chops, slaps, and kicks. Moves are executed much like a fighting game: a combination of d-pad and button presses determine each move. Wrestlers also come equipped with up to three authentic special moves – Luger has the Torture Rack, Malenko the Texas Cloverleaf, and DDP the Diamond Cutter. We have yet to explore the special moves for the 64 different wrestlers available for play, but since many of the extra characters are comedy props, their special moves are most likely clones. Some of the more entertaining characters are Mean Gene himself, valets, female sidekicks, and we assume the Brain and Zybisco are in there as well.

Nitro also features run-in characters, allies who can be summoned once during each match. They come streaking down the aisles and immediately start attacking your opponent. Nitro also features a Tag Team mode and a Tournament mode for single players. FMV intros and endings add even more to the excellent reproduction of Monday Nitro. Wrestling fans might find a few issues with control, but everyone will have to agree that WCW Nitro captures the essence of a live wrestling event like never before.

Mean Gene's in the corner, givin' him the business.

Where's your Diamond Cutter now?

Is that Denny Terio, or Disco Inferno?

Giant executes a choke lift.

Malenko soars off the turnbuckle.

PAUL, THE GAME PROFESSOR

Concept:	8.25
Graphics:	8
Sound:	8
Playability:	8.25
Entertainment:	8

OVERALL: 8.5

"In comparison to the current WCW games available, Nitro is completely different. The playability is far less intuitive and moves are left too much to chance. Selected scenes are fantastic when trying to recognize a wrestler or laugh at an outrageous move, but on a whole, the presentation is a little sketchy. When all comes to push and shove, however, this game is a pro wrestler's dream. The video taunts and Mean Gene in the ring are more than enough to keep me entertained. Grapplers need only apply."

JON, THE GREEDY GAMER

Concept:	8
Graphics:	7
Sound:	8.5
Playability:	6.75
Entertainment:	7.5

OVERALL: 7.5

"I really like the TV-style approach, the addition of commentary, and the run-in characters. But the switch to the energy bar and the exclusion of submission holds and joint attacks is lame. WCW Vs. the World was great because you had to work over opponents, while WCW Nitro is more of a straight-up brawler. Yes, the authentic backdrops are awesome, wrestling as Mean Gene rules, and the characters and costumes are dead on, but the play control suffers and the animations are choppy. Plus, when three or four characters are on-screen, the slow-down is intolerable. Nitro fanatics only."

REINER, THE RAGING GAMER

Concept:	5.75
Graphics:	5
Sound:	8.25
Playability:	2.25
Entertainment:	2

OVERALL: 4.75

"Egad! What the heck is up with this game? So far I've been thoroughly impressed with THQ's wrestling titles, but this game is utterly worthless. The rants, where the wrestlers interact in your face, and the character texture maps are the only things that stand out as being somewhat good in this pile of junk. The animation and execution of combat are some of the worst I've ever seen in a high-end wrestler or fighter. I like the music and FMVs, but it's definitely not enough to even make me think twice about a purchase."
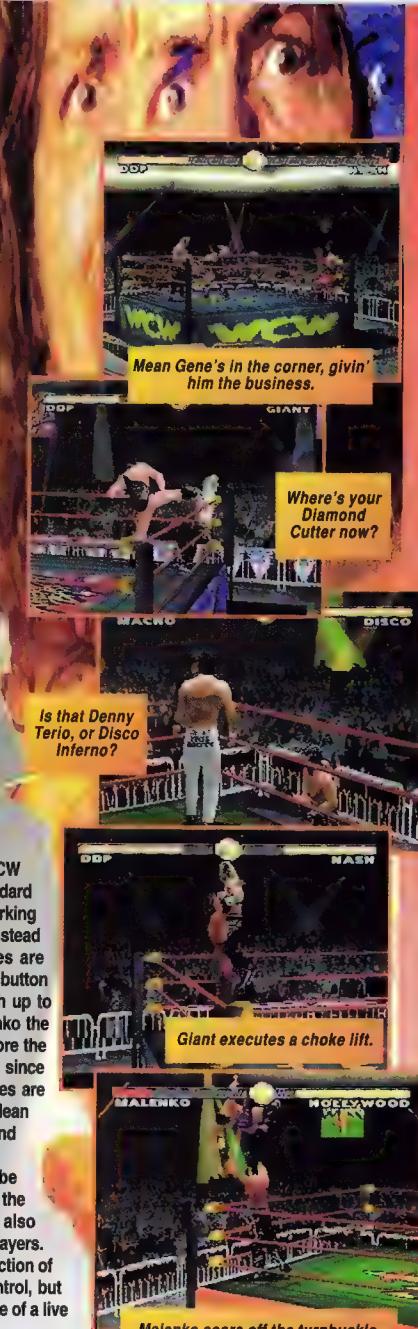
X-MEN VS. STREET FIGHTER

セガサターン
東栄ラムカートリッジ 4MB

ONLY IN JAPAN

- ■ **Size:** 1 CD-ROM and 4-Meg RAM Cart
- ■ **Style:** 1 or 2-Player Head-To-Head Tournament Fighter
- ■ **Special Features:** Dream Match-Ups; Tag Mode; Secret Characters Including Akuma and Alpha 2 Chun-Li; Compatible With Japanese Saturn Only (No GameShark Tricks Here)
- ■ **Replay Value:** High
- ■ **Created by:** Capcom
- ■ **Available:** Now in Japan for Sega Saturn (Possibly Never In U.S.)

▶ **THE BOTTOM LINE 9.25**

The Perfect Arcade Conversion?

There comes a time when we, as gamers, realize that we judged a system too soon. If there ever was a system to fit that bill, it would be the Sega Saturn. After a lackluster release, a pounding by Sony, and third-party development dissipating into nothingness in the U.S., the Saturn didn't have a chance. Because of this, we may never see this conversion of X-Men Vs. Street Fighter.

If you aren't hip on the arcade scene, then you may need some background information. X-Men Vs. Street Fighter is a variant of the Street Fighter engine, with exaggerated jumping and moves, flashy high-numbered combos, and (of course) the X-Men. Another feature of X-Men vs. Street Fighter is the ability to tag between characters simultaneously. Players choose two characters at the beginning of the game, and each has his or her own separate life bar. During the course of play, a player can 'tag' by pushing any punch and kick simultaneously, swapping out active characters. This adds new strategy to the Street Fighter we all know and love – the character who sits gets a chance to heal a little life. Also, all of the Street Fighter characters get souped-up Super Moves, taking up a large part of the screen with animation when unleashed. There are also 'Team Supers' where both characters you control go on-screen together and unleash a combined attack, usually enough to eliminate any foe.

Utilizing a four-meg cart to add to the RAM base of the Saturn, the game runs and looks completely like its arcade counterpart. Utter perfection is the only way to explain this piece of software glory – all of the moves, all of the animations, everything is here. With the addition of the cart (which also prevents any lag time between partner changes) the loading is cut to a minimum. Unfortunately for import game buyers, this game will only work with a Japanese Saturn due to incompatability between the RAM cartridge and GameShark.

Overall, this game is one of the best arcade conversions ever seen to date. The RAM cart adds enough memory to allow for seamless animation and arcade-perfect gameplay. So much in fact, you'll wonder when the sweaty guy that usually pounds you with his team of Magneto/Bison is going to show up. Let's hope that the impossible somehow happens and this game gets released Stateside with the RAM cart in tow.

Meet the Dream Team

Chun Li punishes the frequent jumper.

7 HIT
Light up the opposition with Thor Storm.

Apocalypse is big and HUGE.

3 HIT

P- 536500 TIME PRESS START

A Flash Bomb with the right timing is beautiful and deadly.

ANDY, THE GAME HOMBRE

Concept:	9
Graphics:	9.5
Sound:	9
Playability:	9.5
Entertainment:	9
OVERALL:	**9.25**

"Oh, X-Men Vs. Street Fighter, where were you when the Saturn needed you – like when they were trying to sell units. Alas! Well, either way, X-Men Vs. Street Fighter totally rocks. The RAM upgrade makes this game zing with the kind of speed and precision that few home games ever attain. Awesome moves, kickin' combos, and superb animation are just a couple of the high points. If Sega or Capcom doesn't bring this game out in the U.S. you can officially say the Saturn is dead. And you should, because if they deny you this game, they don't deserve your money."

REINER, THE RAGING GAMER

Concept:	8
Graphics:	9.25
Sound:	8.75
Playability:	9.25
Entertainment:	9
OVERALL:	**9**

"The next time I run into Capcom I'm going to bow down and kiss their feet. This arcade port is astonishing. I can't believe how close it mimics its coin-op father. The RAM cart upgrade makes this game move at lightning speeds. You won't see any kind of loading between character switches, the animation is fluid and loaded with frames, the moves are easy to pull off, and the action is always in your face. A longer contest mode, more characters, and the custom combo would be nice additions, but I have to say, I'm really content with this release. Let's hope Capcom can bring it over to the States (we won't take it unless it has the RAM boost!)!"

JON, THE GREEDY GAMER

Concept:	9
Graphics:	9.5
Sound:	9
Playability:	9.25
Entertainment:	9.25
OVERALL:	**9.25**

"This game should be the reason to own a Saturn. If you've played the arcade version then you've played this game, it's that close. The graphics will just blow you away, and with such a quick loading speed, it's that much more addictive. The balance of characters is excellent, considering the contrast in attacks between the X-Men and Street Fighters. The different attacks make for some awesome match-ups, and it all peaks when you achieve a team combo. Sega and Capcom would be gutless not to bring this title to the U.S. by supporting the RAM cart. It's one of the premier fighters in Capcom's line-up, with tremendous depth of play and arcade-perfect graphics."

by Bergren, the Game Burrito

This month's page was practically finished when Quake II arrived at the GI office. Well, it wasn't about to slip to the March issue, so this month there is an extra featured game and the News Matrix is being skipped altogether. It was a tough call, but I hope you'll understand my predicament.

Blade Runner – Westwood Studios   9

In this 4 CD-ROM graphic adventure, players take on the identity of detective Ray McCoy, a member of the LAPD's Blade Runner squad. For those unfamiliar with the science-fiction classic, a Blade Runner tracks down illegal androids called Replicants. Because of a Replicant's potential for violence and resentment over being enslaved by their human creators, they have been outlawed on Earth. Once a Replicant is discovered, a Blade Runner can shoot it on sight.

Usually, McCoy does the squad's chump work, but due to a rash of Replicant activity in the city, he finds himself investigating some nasty crimes believed to be perpetrated by Replicants. Looking for clues and information is very cool as many of the investigation techniques are taken straight from the film. For example, you can use the ESPER machine – a photographic analyzer that can zoom in and pan around a picture for clues. You can also initiate the Voigt-Kampf test on an individual if you think he or she is a Replicant that needs to be "retired." All of this information that detective McCoy discovers is stored in a handy portable computer called a KIA (Knowledge Integration Assistant). The KIA proves an invaluable tool for cross-referencing almost everything you learn through the game.

Overall, I found myself taken in by the mystery and confusion that surrounded both the story's events and Ray McCoy himself. Fans of point and click, RPGs, and the Blade Runner experience should find this game appealing.

Heavy Gear – Activision   8.25

Heavy Gear takes place on the former Earth colony of Terra Nova. Terra Nova's two battling forces, the Confederated Northern City States and the Allied Southern Territories, did team up at one point to repel Earth's colonization forces, but when the common enemy was defeated, their hostility for each other resurfaced.

I'll start out by stating I don't play a lot of mecha games, but I appreciated the Heavy Gear story that included a history of Terra Nova spanning over many centuries. In addition, the inclusion of three play modes made me want to play the game longer. In the Tour of Duty mode, you can fight for the Northern or Southern army and then join different units depending on your accomplishments and skill level. In the Tour mode, you create your own character and build him or her up from the low ranks by successfully completing missions. Missions will require a variety of skills from search and destroy to reconnaissance. In the other two modes, Training and Story, you are sided with the Northern forces. In the Story mode (laced with plenty of FMV scenes) you take on the identity of Senior Ranger Edward Scott, a member of the 67th Harvest Wind unit under the command of Col. Arthur Janus. The mission objectives follow the storyline and start out easier than those of the Tour mode.

As far as the mecha units go, each army has eight (like the Black Mamba, Spitting Cobra, and Kodiak) that you can pilot from a first or third-person view. The units differ in size, strength, speed, and load capacity; but of course, they can be customized to your personal tastes too. Overall, Heavy Gear is a solid game that mecha fans should check out.

Quake II – id/Activision   9.5

The time has come to ignore everything else going on in your life and play Quake II. If you want, you can take small breaks to eat and relieve yourself, but I won't recommend it. The highly anticipated game from the pioneers at id software is sure to make first-person junkies giggle with delight. It goes without saying that the goal is to kill as many alien scum as possible, but Quake II is also enhanced with the extra challenge of primary and secondary mission objectives to complete. For these missions, you will have to explore eight units, each with numerous levels (including some hidden).

Quake II scored huge with a variety of fierce alien adversaries that make you proud to do your duty: kicking Strogg butt. In all, there are eighteen common enemies that are a genetic blend of different captured races, each eager to steal your health away in a variety of ways. For example, there are Iron Maidens with arm-mounted rocket launchers and flesh-tearing claws, annoying cyber-dogs (called Parasites) that latch-on to your body and suck away health, Medics that raise up dead enemies, primitive Barracuda Sharks with razor-sharp teeth and spiked tails, and heavily armored Tank Commanders with arm-mounted machine guns and laser blasters, as well as shoulder-mounted rocket launchers.

Fortunately, you will not be alone with numerous weapons and military supplies to obtain throughout the levels. There are eleven different weapons including the Super Shotgun, Hyper Blaster, Rail Gun, and everybody's favorite, the BFG. Military supplies like four types of armor, five types of ammo, silencers, health packs, Quad Damage, and Invulnerability aid the cause as well. To help carry extra ammunition, you can acquire Bandoleers and Heavy Packs. These supplies and weapons, along with a variety of enemies, large levels, and incredible graphics (especially with 3Dfx), are a part of what make Quake II one of the best games of the year.

recent releases

NetStorm: Islands at War – Titanic
8.25 In this real-time strategy title, the three Furies (Rain, Wind, and Thunder) are the essence of all creation (energy). In a futuristic renaissance-type setting, missions are performed on floating islands that require the construction of bridges to enemy islands and floating crystal mines (money). I liked NetStorm's rather unique approach, as well as graphics and animation, but got bored with building a lot of bridges.

The X-Files: Unrestricted Access - Fox Interactive
6 This title is not a game, but rather a reference source of over 90 X-Files cases from the show's first four seasons. The two disc set certainly contains a lot of information, but not much entertainment value unless you happen to be a big time X-Files fanatic.

Soda Off Road Racing - Software Allies
5.5 There are quite a few tracks in this game, but the control is absolutely horrible. If you are looking for a good racing game for your PC, you will not find it here.

NBA Live 98 - EA Sports
8 We put Sega's NBA Action '98 up against Live 98, and Live came out on top with a better front-end. The control is friendly when using a game pad and the graphics have great detail (Mark Price looks like Mark Price), but the animation is rather choppy.

Alien Earth - Playmates Interactive Entertainment
7 PIE bills this game as a mixture of adventure, action, and role-playing. Unfortunately, the action is slow and navigating through levels is often interrupted by loading time. On the other hand, I did like collecting a wide variety of items and experimenting with them to create other useful items like spears, blow torches, and homemade bombs.

PlayStation

REVIEW
8.5

Riven

Size:
5 CD-ROMs
Style:
1-Player Graphic Adventure
Special Features:
Over 4,000 Images; Over 70 Live Action Sequences; 3 Hours of Animation
Replay Value:
Low
Created by:
Cyan Software for Acclaim
Available:
Now for Sony PlayStation

If you were one of the millions captivated by the storyline and graphic detail of Myst, then you will not be disappointed with this massive sequel. Riven, which debuted on the PC, is also on the Sony PlayStation in a five CD-ROM package. This point and click adventure includes exceptionally detailed and colorful graphic environments with over 4,000 video quality images and three hours of animation. In addition, Riven is filled with numerous challenging puzzles that the brightest of gamers will find stupefying at some point. However, if you lack patience, or desire games with a fast and rigorous pace, Riven will start to bore you after awhile.

PlayStation

REVIEW
7.5

Tennis Arena

Size:
1 CD-ROM
Style:
1 or 2-Player Tennis (Up to 4-Player Via Multi-Tap)
Special Features:
20 Different Tournament Sites; 10 Different Players (Plus More Hidden); Singles or Doubles Mode; Power Serves; Specialty Shots; World Rankings
Replay Value:
Average
Created by:
Smart Dog for Ubi Soft
Available:
Now for Sony PlayStation

Tennis Arena is a solid tennis title. The character designs are refreshing and the special moves are entertaining. Maxing out your special star is always an exciting moment, especially when you're staring down your opponent's throat with his/her special lit. The shot selection is nice, with easy to execute top and backspin, and the shoulder buttons really put some wacky english on the ball. This isn't a game for tennis purists, but if you're looking for a good lightweight sports game to pass the time, this could be it. Some sharper graphics would have made it even better.

Nintendo 64

REVIEW
5

AeroGauge

Size:
64 Megabit
Style:
1 or 2-Player Racing
Special Features:
5 Hovercrafts (5 Hidden); 4 Courses (2 Hidden); 3 Speed Settings; Controller Configuration; Grand Prix, Single Race, Time Attack, and Vs. Modes
Replay Value:
Moderately Low
Created by:
Locomotive for ASCII
Available:
March for Nintendo 64

AeroGauge was recently released in Japan and ASCII has plans to release it in the U.S. next month. Not bucking any trends in development for the N64, AeroGauge is yet another racing title to crowd its burgeoning library. The player will initially be able to pilot one of five Hovercrafts with varying attributes such as top speed and acceleration. Not as much like Hovercrafts but more like planes, there is quite a variance in altitude that the vehicles can take. The control is fairly straightforward as there is a gas, brake, and hard turn button. The game comes off a little dry. The concept of AeroGauge is worn out, and we put it down after just a few hours because the lack of originality just plain bored us.

PlayStation

Point Blank

This game is way too much fun. At first you would think that a simple gun game like Hogan's Alley would grow tiresome quickly. Nothing could be further from the truth. Point Blank is loaded with replay value, from the multiple variations on each shooting game, to the Quest Mode where RPG and light gun genres collide. Players of any skill level will be able to enjoy this game, as it has varying degrees of difficulty. All GunCon owners should jump on this as soon as it is released.

Size:
1 CD-ROM
Style:
1 or 2-Player Light Gun Shooter
Special Features:
Quest Mode; GunCon Compatible; Over 35 Levels; Memory Card Save; Ranking And Evaluation
Replay Value:
Moderately High
Created by:
Namco
Available:
February for Sony PlayStation

PlayStation

REVIEW **8**

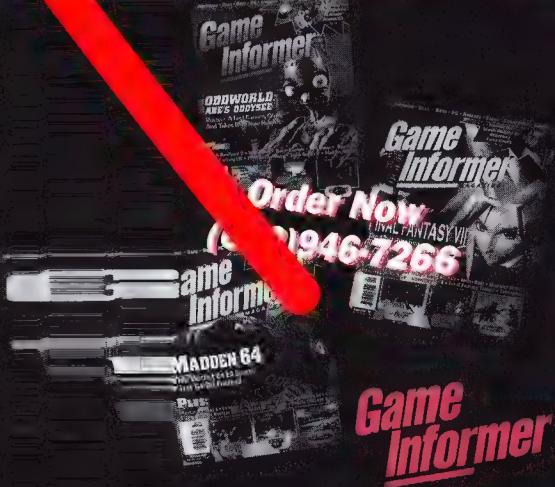### NBA In The Zone '98

Konami's NBA In The Zone '98 has improved over last year's version by adding a create player feature with all the adjustable abilities you could want, but still falls short of Live 98's numerous and wacky physical traits. The graphics are average and contain only a few dunk animations, but Zone demonstrates diversity with some acrobatic finger roles. One of the most challenging parts of the game is getting back on defense after a missed shot. You must quickly draw the shooter back after shooting and, if you want the offensive board, switch to another player in the front-court. Also, Zone tracks a lot of stats during the season, but unless you play 12 minute quarters, it's impossible to compete with the league leaders.

Size:
1 CD-ROM
Style:
1 or 2-Player Basketball (8-Player Via Multi-Tap)
Special Features:
NBA License; On Command Double Teams and Isolations; Home Court Advantage; 3 Difficulty Levels; Create Player; Exhibition, Season, Play-Off, and All-Star Modes
Replay Value:
Moderately High
Created by:
Konami Computer Entertainment Tokyo for Konami Sports
Available:

Monster Rancher

REVIEW

9

Size:
1 CD-ROM
Style:
1-Player Breeding Simulator
Special Features:
Use Any CD to Create
Randomly Generated
Monsters; Battle Mode; Train
and Breed Monsters;
Memory Card Save;
Exploration; Creature
Combination; 2-Player Battle
Replay Value:
High
Created by:
Tecmo
Available:
Now for Sony PlayStation

For any of you infatuated with the 'virtual pet' craze, you should try monster Rancher. Taking digital pets one step further, Monster Rancher has 3D creatures that you feed and train in order to prepare for battles and win trophies. There are over 200 creatures, most of them randomly generated by placing CDs from around the house into the system. The data is read off the CD, and a new monster is born. Some of the monsters can only be acquired through 'breeding,' or combining two monsters at the lab. The graphics are sharp, with some humor thrown in for good measure. A nice change from the regular humdrum of video gaming.

Micro Machines
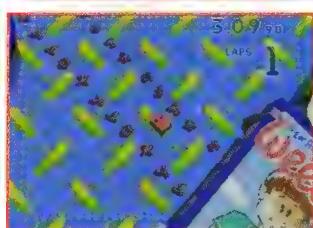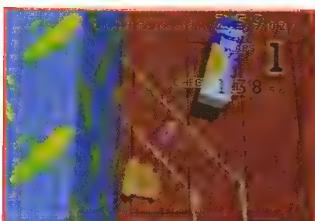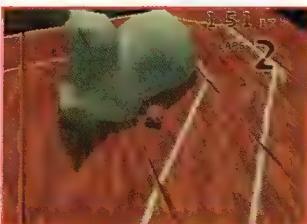
REVIEW

8

Size:
1 CD-ROM
Style:
1 or 2-Player Racing (Up to
8-Player Via Multi-Tap)
Special Features:
3 Gameplay Modes
Including Time Trial, Party,
Keepsies, and Team; New
Cars as Prizes; 14 Tracks;
8 Characters
Replay Value:
Moderately High
Created by:
Codemasters for Midway
Available:
February For Sony
PlayStation

Back in the heyday of the NES, the renegade programmers called Codemasters took the license for Micro Machines and really did a great job. All of the things that made that version great are back in this newest installment, with some hefty 32-bit upgrades. Everything is now 3D including cars and tracks, but with the same control-style as before. Probably the coolest thing is the ability to get unique extra cars, then compete with them against your friends for 'keepsies.' By doing so you run the risk of losing your car permanently to your opponent, but he has the same worries if he loses. Definitely try this one out if you're looking for a game that makes good use of the multi-tap.

Ray Tracers
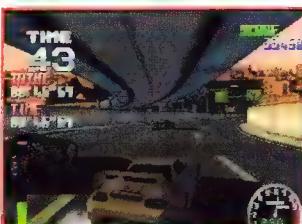
REVIEW

7.5

Size:
1 CD-ROM
Style:
1-Player Racing Combat
Special Features:
Invincible Car For Ramming
Opponents; Time Attack; Car
Battles; 5 Playable Vehicles
Replay Value:
Low
Created by:
Taito for THQ
Available:
February for Sony
PlayStation

Ray Tracers is like a cross between Destruction Derby and Ridge Racer, but it's actually a rip-off of Chase HQ. The goal is to get to the end of each race as fast as possible and then destroy the boss car by ramming it. Points are scored by destroying cars as you pass them during the race; however, that also slows you down as well. There are four cars and one hidden to choose from. The driving physics are great, and the choice of cars is decent, but there aren't enough tracks to keep you playing it over and over again. Rent it before you buy it.

Steep Slope Sliders

REVIEW
7.75

Size:
1 CD-ROM
Style:
1-Player Snowboarding
Special Features:
Four Secret Characters;
Seven Levels Including
Alpine, Snowboard Park,
and Half-Pipe
Replay Value:
Average
Created by:
Cave/Victor Interactive
Software for Sega
Available:
Now for Sega Saturn

Steep Slope Sliders offers up a fresh look at an increasingly crowded market of snowboarding games. Players can score points for tricks anywhere on the course, as characters have varying attributes and tricks that they can pull off. The gameplay is really nice except when you get too close to an object and you stick to it (ever played Gun Griffon?). But if you're into boarding, there's tons in here: rail slides, flips, you name it. Track choices include regular racing, a half-pipe, and board park. The tracks are decent, the half-pipe is fun, but the board park is what the game's about. If you are a Saturn-owning snowboard freak, you'll want this one. But for the multi-system owner, Cool Boarders 2 on the PlayStation is still the way to go.

Nagano Winter Olympics

PlayStation

PREVIEW
5

CD-ROM
Style:
to 4-Player Winter
Olympic Events
Special Features:
Compatible; Record
Heavy Button
Mashing; Memory Card
Save Events; 16
Countries; Difficulty Levels
Replay Value:
Low
Created by:
Konami Computer
Entertainment Tokyo
for Konami
Available:
Now for Sony PlayStation

Hopefully, the Winter Olympics are not going to be as tedious to watch as this game is to play. Nagano has some interesting ideas, but appears to lack any sort of pre-planning. In other words, this game is awful. The control is sloppy, there is a serious lack of events, and it leaves you with the desire to never see the Winter Olympics (which is a shame). Konami broke the track and field genre wide open back in the eighties, but Nagano severely blemishes their record. Run away from this title and hope you never see it again.

Vigilante 8

PlayStation

PREVIEW

Size:
1 CD-ROM
Style:
1 or 2-Player Auto Duel
Special Features:
Twelve Playable Muscle
Cars; Twelve Arenas Set in
the Southwest; Multiple
Camera Views; Several
Multiplayer Options;
Awesome Effects;
Massive Arsenal
Created by:
Activision
Available:
March for Sony PlayStation

If Critical Depth was too far out of your league in the vehicular combat genre, then Activision has exactly what you want – a clone of Twisted Metal. Vigilante 8 offers everything that TM does, but tops it with better graphics and effects. There are twelve explosive arenas and twelve muscle cars to choose from. The first thing you'll notice with this title is its look. With lens flares, real-time reflection mapping, and car and terrain deformations, V8 adds a touch of realism to a far-fetched concept. There are several camera views, tons of weapons, and an intense head-to-head duel where you can bash on your friend's cool wheels.

One Liners

REVIEW
7

Auto Destruct

Size:
1 CD-ROM
Style:
1-Player Driving/Shooter
Special Features:
Huge Detailed City Maps;
Run Over Anything; Multiple
Camera Angles And Weapon
Options; Targeting System
Replay Value:
Moderately Low
Created By:
Neurostone for
Electronic Arts
Available:
February for Sony
PlayStation

Imagine a game that puts you in the seat of the fastest ride around to destroy your enemies with extreme prejudice using missiles, machine guns, and the like. Sound Twisted? Well it is, but Auto Destruct does have some fresh ideas in it. For example, there are wide open city streets with everyday traffic getting in your way. This makes for some entertainment, because it allows free movement anywhere, rather than only on a track. Our favorite benefit of this is using a shortcut to get ahead of the bad guys and then ramming them head-on...cool. Twisted Metal fans will want to check this one out, but the overall masses may want to do a rental first.

**Broken Sword:
Shadow of the
Templars**
PlayStation
Overall: 7.25
If you like games
such as Silverload
or Discworld this game is right up your alley as it is better than them both. Point, click, and explore the mystery.

Shipwreckers
PlayStation
Overall: 8.5
The game is kinda
neat, but lacks
any staying power.
Great multiplayer
game for pirate-themed parties or to cure excessive bouts of boredom.

REVIEW
8.75

FIFA: Road to World Cup 98

Size:
1 CD-ROM
Style:
1 or 2-Player Soccer
(8-Player Via Multi-Tap)
Special Features:
World Cup License;
Improved Pass Interface
(Including Through Pass);
Club Teams; World Cup
Qualifying and Finals
Rounds; Indoor Matches;
Stadium Fly-Ins; Crowd
Chants
Replay Value:
Moderately High
Created by:
EA Sports
Available:
Now for Sony PlayStation

Like its N64 cousin, this year's PlayStation FIFA is much better than last year, especially since EA Sports included the through pass (either on the ground or lob). A series of different traps, one-touch volleys, and special moves complete the vastly improved interface. It's not as easy to play as Goal Storm, but this FIFA does an excellent job with defense. The World Cup license is huge, and the real players competing for the cup will have international fans drooling. Extensive team management options and solid gameplay round out an enjoyable title. However, if you don't care about the license, be sure to check out Goal Storm '98 as well.

NASCAR 98
Saturn
Overall: 9
If you liked Andretti
Racing you'll love
this game. It is the
best racing sim for
the Saturn and it even has a split-screen mode for head-to-head racing.

Ten Pin Alley
Saturn
Overall: 9.5
The greatest bowl-
ing game ever
made is now avail-
able on Saturn. The graphics suffer a little, but the game is essentially the same. Even if you don't like bowling, check it out.

PREVIEW

Tonic Trouble

Size:
96 Megabit
Style:
1-Player Puzzle/Adventure
Special Features:
Characters Have Emotion;
Special Flight Camera;
Multiple Gameplay Styles
Including Puzzle Solving,
Action, Role-Playing, and
Flying; Full 3D Environments;
Free Roaming Characters
Created By:
Ubi Soft
Available:
April for Nintendo 64

Tonic Trouble looks like another innovative title in the same vein of Rayman from the folks at Ubi Soft. From what we heard, the game mixes different genres together, bringing a fresh look to the 3D action/platformer. Players will be required to solve puzzles, interact with other characters to find secrets, search for hidden items, as well as doing some precision jumping and flying. Supporting characters will have a mind of their own; they will move around the world and usually never be in the same place at the same time, which will lead to some serious hunting once a particular character needs to be found. N64 owners, keep an eye out for this one.

**Olympic Hockey
Nagano '98**
Nintendo 64
Overall: 4
Don't let them fool
you. Midway should
have called this
Wayne Gretzky's Olympic Hockey because it's practically identical to the pro-hockey game, except for the Olympic Teams and Tournament.
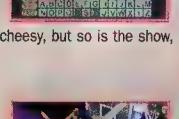
Wheel of Fortune
Nintendo 64
Overall: 8
For a gameshow
game, this one's
pretty good. The
graphics are a little cheesy, but so is the show, so who cares.

NBA Live 98
Saturn
Overall: 8
A solid game. Not
much different from
the PS-X version.

SAN FRANCISCO RUSH EXTREME RACING
for Nintendo 64

Trick: Locating the Ultra-Cool Hidden Stunt Zone.

Vehicle Requirements: It doesn't matter. Any car will do.

Track Requirements: This trick only works on Track 6.

Code Requirements: These two codes must be entered for this trick to work properly.

Toggle Race Clock – At the Setup screen hold Z, Down C, and Up C. Continue holding Z, but release the other buttons. Now press and hold Up C and Down C. Note: Make sure you press the first button required before you hit the second.

Start From Crash – At the Setup screen hold Z, Left C, and Right C. Continue holding Z, but release the other buttons and then press and hold Right C and Left C. Note: Make sure you hit the first button required before you hit the second.

Reward: A vehicular skate park like no other.

How It's Done
This title has enough air as is, but hidden within one of the tracks is a cave loaded with massive jumps and a loop-to-loop. Here's what you'll need to do. Enter any mode, and select track 6. When the race begins turn around 180 degrees. Stay on this track until it splits into two. Take the hard left (the right track goes up a hill). This track will take you around a corner and onto a dirt path. The path will turn into pavement and will veer slightly to the right. Stay on this until you come to the Check Point. From here, cut over to the left and onto the grass. Hold the brakes as you go down the hill, and angle yourself over to the left. At the bottom of the hill (located near the wall) is a hidden tunnel. Enter it, and make sure you have enough speed to successfully complete the loop-to-loop. Inside you will find a haven of great jumps.
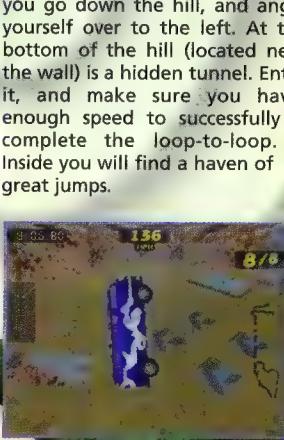
MONSTER RANCHER
for Sony PlayStation

While there are far too many combinations of monsters to name all of them in this book, there are a few rare combinations acquired through items found during the game. Here is a list of the rarest monsters in the game and how to get them:

DRAGON: Get a monster up to Class B and enter it into the Trial Cup in April. There you will face a Dragon. Win the tournament and then advance your monster to Class A. When you do, you will be invited to a "Committee's Special Tournament." The prize for the Tournament is the Dragon's Fang. Add the Dragon's Fang item to a creature combination consisting of a Dino and a Naga. The Dragon will appear.

MAGIC: Do some exploration with Karn at Titus and find the Old Mirror. Breed a monster to Class A and you will be invited to a "Committee's Special Tournament" the following September. Beat the Magic Monster and a message will appear.
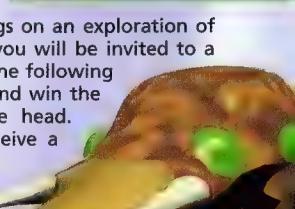
HENGER: First, find the left and right arms and the left and right legs on an exploration of Reno. Raise a Class A monster and you will be invited to a "Committee's Special Tournament" the following January. Beat the Henger Monster and win the tournament. The prize will be the head. Follow the instructions after to receive a Henger Monster.

DOODLE: Raise a Monol's Fame status to over 80, then drop it back below 65. Your Monol will become a Scribble. Combine the Scribble with another monster to get the Doodle.
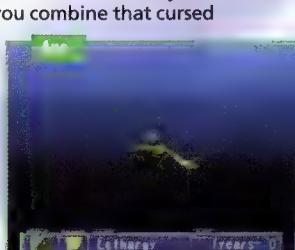
GHOST: Let a monster die and then start a new one. In the first tournament your new monster enters, it will have an 1/16 chance of being cursed by the soul of the dead monster. You will know by the skull marking on its chest. If you combine that cursed monster with another, you get a Ghost.

APE: Explore the Jungle area and get the Magic Banana. Then combine any two monsters and add the Magic Banana. The result will be an Ape

RESIDENT EVIL 2

LEON'S SURVIVAL GUIDE

The City Streets

At the beginning of this adventure, the Raccoon City Streets are a one-way path to the Raccoon City Police Department (RPD). Make your way as quickly as possible to the RPD.

Along the way Leon can acquire the Shotgun and additional Hand Gun Bullets (5). If you are a true adventurer, however, you will not pick up a single item in the City Streets which will allow access to a secret of Resident Evil 2 (see Strategy Extra, pg. 59).

The Raccoon City Police Department (RPD)

The Main Hall of the RPD contains Hand Gun Bullets, Ink Ribbon, and Typewriter. Head to single door located to back left. It is the only door currently open. Get the Blue Key Card from injured cop and use it on Computer Terminal in Main Hall. Two doors will unlock.

Go through double doors to the west. A file containing information on a safe combination is found here. Ditch Knife in Item Box and make note of locked desk in the corner.

Continue through to the next door and into "L"-shaped Hall. Dead cop on the floor holds Hand Gun Bullets. Proceed a few more steps and you'll be greeted by a Killer. If you already have the Shotgun, blast away. A Pistol will work, but outrunning the beast to the next door is best strategy without the Shotgun.

Move down the "U"-shaped hall to double doors in middle. Use Lighter on Fireplace in back room to get Red Jewel (1 of 2). Also get File and Hand Gun Bullets.

Moving on, have Pistol fully loaded when entering the next hall. Zombies await. If slightly injured, use Greenery under stairs. Move into Store Room/Dark Room and deposit Red Gem. Note the locked locker (see Strategy Extra, pg. 59).

Ascend stairs. At end of hall, move the two statues onto pressure plates. Make sure the statues face toward each other and Red Jewel (2 of 2) is reward. Head through door at end of hall. Three Zombies will greet you. After a few shots, move into STARS office. Get Diary File, Unicorn Medallion, Hand Gun Bullets, Shotgun, and Spray. Meet up with Claire and backtrack to Main Hall. Store Red Jewel and extra health along the way.

Use Unicorn Medallion on central statue in Main Hall to get Spade Precinct Key (blue). Head back toward Second Floor.

Along the way, Records Room on southwest side (consult Map) can be opened with the key. Inside, push stepstool into corner to get Crank. Box of Bullets and Ribbon are also found. Continue to Second Floor and use Spade Key on door just past STARS office. Key can be dropped.

Inside the door four Zombies feast. Drop 'em and replenish ammo at end of narrow corridor. Continue through only door that will open and into Library (note locked desk prior to entering).

Inside Library, go up stairs, across catwalk, and through door. Continue down Third Floor corridor and into Attic. Use Crank on appropriate hole to drop stairs. Rid yourself of Crank. Head back to Library.

On Library catwalk, move to side opposite stairs. Floor will give way dropping Leon to level below. Inspect diagram on wall then hit

BASIC TRAINING AND KEYS TO USING THIS GUIDE

- All directions (north, south, east, west) are made in reference to the in-game maps.
- Many of the Ink Ribbon locations are not mentioned because they are normally found next to Old Typewriters.
- Many of the Herbs located throughout the game are not mentioned. If you see any, especially the Green Herb, it

is not a bad idea to store it (if on the way to a Storeroom).
- Save whenever you wish, but remember: the more saves the worse the final grade.
- Ditch the Knife immediately. It is worthless.
- If caught in a Zombie's grasp, tap all controller buttons (including directional) to quickly break free.

Red Switch. Starting from left, move first two bookcases one space to right. A panel slides, revealing Bishop Plug. Get it and move through double doors.

Second Floor Concourse is guarded by Zombies. An escape ladder can be dropped. Activate it, but don't go down yet. Instead, proceed to opposite side of Concourse and into door.

Inside is Second Floor Storeroom. Store Bishop Plug and look for Small Key. Backtrack through Library and use Small Key to get Custom Hand Gun Kit. Combine it with Hand Gun. Head back to Second Floor Storeroom.

Continuing through Storeroom, enter hall, and move through door directly across. Proceed

toward end and acquire Hand Gun Bullets from deceased. Crows are no match for Custom Pistol. Exit through door that leads to Roof.

Journey down stairs and around four Zombies that are easily avoided.

Enter Power Cabin and grab Valve Handle, Hand Gun Bullets, and Ribbon.

Return to Roof and use Valve Handle on valve to douse flames. Return to Second Floor Storeroom.

Ditch Valve Handle and grab Red Jewels. Return to previous hall and move to left, where lack of fire reveals a door. Go in.

Place Red Gems in figurines to get King Plug. Grab Diamond Precinct Key (purple) and Shotgun Shells.

Return to Storeroom and drop King Plug. Move back to Crow Hall, through gray door, and down stairs, observing fine Greenery for the taking.

Entering East Office, Hand Gun Bullets can be found on corpse. Main Office Area is infested with Zombies, but there is an Ink Ribbon to be found. Small inner office holds Safe to be opened with combination of 2-2-3-6. Get ammo and Map. Note Greenery behind desk. Now, move though blue double doors.

Waiting Room is filled with Zombies; but before proceeding, make sure four Inventory Slots are available.

Proceed through Waiting Room and through door at end of hall. More Zombies await.

Move into first door to the right: the Interrogation Room. Rook Plug is on the shelf. Grab electric Cord and Spray and prepare for a surprise.

Exit and enter next door to the right. Grab Small Key.

Head back to Main Hall (where Unicorn Medallion was used) and through double doors. Small Key

can be used on locked desk to get Hand Gun Bullets. Continue through to "U"-shaped Hall. Use electric Cord on switch to shut iron window gates. Move to West Side Stairwell and to locked door on right. Drop Precinct Key. Have Shotgun armed and ready.

After Zombies have been cut down, search drawers to find Film and Shotgun Shells. Move out opposite door and return to West Office. (Use Film in Darkroom under stairwell.)

Inside inner office an old acquaintance greets you. Grab Heart Precinct Key (red) from desk. Outer office holds Hand Gun Bullets and Note for file. Move into Main Hall.

Proceed to locked door located at rear of East Office. Drop Precinct Key, enter Back Hall, and move to the end. On shelf are Shotgun Shells. Move down stairs to RPD Basement.

Beware: the Basement Hall is patrolled by Dogs. Move through brown double doors to west and enter Heating Room. On back wall is Map of Basement. Control Panel with five switches will activate Key Card panel on another door. The switch order is Up, Up, Down, Down, Up. Leave.

Continue west and enter Garage at end of Basement Hall. Meet up with Ada and assist with truck. Enter the door.

Ada will bolt. Follow her to end of hall and through gate, while snatching Hand Gun Bullets from desk. Inside Cell Block, Ben will explain how to access Sewers. Grab Manhole Opener from shelf next to cell and backtrack to door just prior to Cell Block. Inside Kennels is a manhole. Use Manhole Opener and proceed down.

In Raccoon City Sewage Disposal Plant, two giant Spiders lurk in corridor. Quickly take them out (or run past) and head up stairs at other end.

At top of stairs, to left is Storeroom. Straight ahead is an "I"-shaped room. Grab all available Chess Pieces and enter "I"-shaped room. Use each
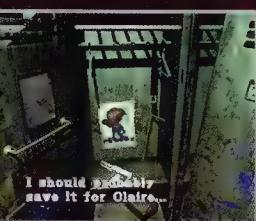
Chess Piece on Control Panel and exit the same way you entered. Ada is here and formal introductions are made. A sequence will take place allowing control of Ada.

With Ada, proceed through only door that will open and into area with two Dogs. A few shots later, head to door on opposite side of area and enter.

Don't throw switch. Instead, descend down ledges into Pool Area and climb over box on left. Push center box to right. Climb back over box and push left box into space. Line up other boxes in place from left to right. Move back up ledges and hit switch. Walk across newly formed bridge and grab Club Precinct Key (green). Leave.

Move straight and through open door, down elevator, and grab Shells. Return to area where control of Ada began. Throw Leon Club Key and Shells. Controlling Leon once again, pick up Shells and Club Key and return through Garage to Basement Hall.

Look out for Killers and proceed through double doors at east end of Basement Hall. Once in Autopsy Room, inspect cabinet in far corner. Grab Red Key Card and prepare to meet the undead. Exit and move to opposite end of hall.

Swipe Red Key Card on panel and enter Armory. Find Bullets and Shells on shelves. In one of the lockers is Submachine Gun (take it) and Side Pack (equip it). Return to RPD Floor One.

Enter door next to stairs. In back is Magnum and File. Grab Shells from locker. Inspect Map to discover where to use Club Key (green). Move back through East side of RPD to Media Room. Use Club Key and drop it. Enter.

Use Lighter on stove in corner and hit the three lamp switches in this order: Middle, Right, Left. Golden Cog Wheel will fall from picture. (Note: You can grab the film but it's optional.) Grab Cog and move to RPD Third

Floor (3F). Beware, Killer on Second Floor Concourse.

Once in Attic, head up stairs and place Cog in mechanism. Panel opens and Knight Plug is found. Answer 'Yes' and slide down Dust Chute to RPD Basement (B1). Go to Cell Block to check on Ben. Get File from Ben. Move to Kennel and down manhole.

Once through sewer corridor and up the stairs, enter door straight ahead with Submachine Gun ready. Make sure you have Knight Plug and prepare for a Boss.

Boss Guide - This guy is cake with the Submachine Gun. Keep your distance and shoot downward when the vermin it spits from its mouth get close.

After taking down the Boss, insert Knight Plug and enter newly opened door. Ada is waiting. Go down stairs and exit.

Raccoon City Sewers

Move through sewers and into Storeroom. Inside is Fax File on table and Hand Gun Bullets in corner drawer. Push large locker to reveal a door. Open door and go down.

Locate Alcohol Lamps (2) and use Lighter to shed light on the subject. A Magnum Clip and Shells become visible. Go back up ladder.

Make sure to grab Valve Handle from Item Box and use Elevator to head down. After a little firefight, control returns to Ada.

With Ada, follow the woman out the door and up the ladder. Once inside corridor, quickly run to other side to avoid bugs. Go down ladder.

A meeting takes place between Ada and Annette. After they're done, move across catwalk and down ladder (the only way to go). Control returns to Leon.

Head through door back out into canal. Near ladder is small alcove with Wolf Medal and Shells on dead

soldiers. Move to opposite end of canal and to the left. Spiders are easily avoided. Move through door and two more Spiders await. Straight ahead is waterfall and Clearance Identification Panel. Place Wolf Medal into Panel and move to alcove directly behind you. Enter double doors.

Move to Red Light and use Valve Handle to lower Catwalk. Proceed across and use Valve Handle again to raise Catwalk. If you have an Ink Ribbon, it's probably a good idea to save. Grab Shells and Greenery if possible. Head out door immediately ahead.

Move to the end of corridor and a Giant Alligator will greet you.

Boss Guide - Prior to encountering the Alligator, you will notice a green switch on the wall. After the Gator appears, run back to the Switch. It is now red. Use it to dislodge the Gas Cylinder. When the Gator puts the Cylinder in its mouth, start firing. Boss over.

Move back down corridor to where Alligator was first seen. Use Switch to open door. You are now reunited with Ada. Get patched up and move up ladder.

Head across Catwalk and up ramp. Grab Eagle Medal from deceased and File from console. Backtrack through Alligator corridor to room with Typewriter. Lower Catwalk using Valve Handle. Go across and exit.

Use Eagle Medal on Electric Panel to stop waterfall. Exit through door.

Keep moving and hit Power Switch to right of Tram. Enter Tram and take a trip to the other side. Exit Tram and turn left. Use Lighter to ignite Flare Gun. Pick up Weapon Box Key. Proceed through door.

In this corridor, Zombies are waiting. To the left (at the dead end) is Custom Shotgun Kit. Combine it with

Shotgun. To the opposite side is the exit. Take it to enter a similar corridor.

More zombies. To the right is some Greenery and to the left is a ladder up. Take the ladder to the Storeroom/Control Room.

Grab Shells, Magnum Clip, and Spray. Make sure to have one Inventory Slot open before exiting through door.

Enter the Train Cabin and at opposite end grab Control Panel Key (with a "D" on it) and Magnum Clip. Exit.

There is a Control Panel next to the Train. Use Key to power-up the lift.

The Train descends and strange rumblings happen outside. Exit Train to investigate. A Boss awaits.

Boss Guide - Armed with the Magnum this mutant is a pushover. Create some space between Leon and the foe, and then pump him full of lead. Be sure to take careful aim.

Return inside Train to check on Ada. Leon will pick her up and carry her to Lab Storeroom.

The Umbrella Lab

In Lab Storeroom grab Magnum Clip from desk and Shells from locker. Exit.

Move down corridor marked "Main Shaft" and enter door. Proceed to the center and down East Shaft (Blue). Enter.

Proceed down corridor and enter "frosty" door. Inside Cold Room is Fuse Case. Use Fuse Case on Machine directly behind to obtain Main Fuse. Also take can of Spray if needed. Exit back to Main Shaft.

Use Main Fuse on mechanism in middle of floor. Now head down to West Corridor (Red). Enter.

Move to the right and enter door at end. Inside is Flamethrower in locker. Hand Gun Bullets and File are also found. Grab Security File and turn on Gas Sprinkler. Use Flamethrower or Lighter to torch the Tentacles. Now, enter the shaft where Tentacles were.

Two Killers will be a surprise in this room. Torch 'em and then grab Shells

(2) out of steel cabinet. Ribbon is on desk. Exit.

Proceed down hall to large steel door. Hit Switch to open it. Dispose of Poisonous Plants and continue down hall to the door. Go through door, onto ledge, and down ladder. Enter door at bottom.

Move through the corridor and look out for Killers. There is basically only one way to go and you'll pass a Typewriter and Item Box. Just prior to Item Box is a Map. Continue to large metal door and enter Research Center. The small outer room contains Weapon Box and Custom Magnum Kit. Equip it. Small room leads to larger lab filled with Zombies. Toward the back of the room is red Lab Key Card. Grab it and exit the lab.

Move straight ahead while avoiding the Slugs that drop from the ceiling. Use the Lab Key Card to enter. Inside is a Giant Moth that is easily taken care of. Head to corner with computer terminal. Slugs must be disposed of before computer can be used. Use computer and enter User ID as 'GUEST'. Exit and return up to Lab B4.

Return to East Shaft (blue) and switch door on right. Go to Control Panel and initiate security switches. Note: the door will not open, but you must do this for Claire to enter later. Return to door just prior to this and use the red Lab Key Card to enter.

Move straight and look out for Zombies. Locate Light Switch and turn it on. More Zombies will appear. Get MO Disk, Spray, and Magnum Clip. Exit.

Annette Birkin confronts Leon, and after a mishap drops the G-Virus. Grab it and after the self-destruct signal, go to West Shaft (red).

After a crazy confrontation in West Shaft, continue into West Shaft (red) and down ladder to Lab (B5).

Move down corridor and beware of Zombies. Go to Computer Terminal next to a huge door. Use MO Disk to

open it. Enter the opened passage and proceed through door.

Head straight ahead and hit switch next to elevator. Prepare for the final conflict. See below for Boss strategy.

Boss Guide - This creature takes two forms. First, create some space by running around the perimeter, shooting it a few times before running again. Eventually the creature will morph and leap above. Try to keep moving as it leaps down. It will continue with this pattern until it dies or time runs out. Just hope there is enough time to escape.

Exit the lab via the elevator.

A save slot will be created for Claire's quest which is the second part of the adventure. Only after completing this will the game be finished.

Think You Are Finished??

The adventure is not done! To get the complete ending you must play through Claire's Second Scenario. If you beat Leon's first scenario, you can then view the Resident Evil story from Claire's perspective. Many of Leon's previous actions will directly affect Claire's. Did Leon take the Submachine Gun...dispose of the alligator...partially open the Lab's Security Door? This, plus new puzzles, bosses, and surprises await. Here are some tips to make it easier.

Claire will begin in an unfamiliar area on the City Streets, but once the first two areas are explored, the scenery becomes familiar. The Second Scenario of this epic has identical puzzles as the first, but some of the item locations are different.

The first order of business for Claire is to get to the Main Hall of the RPD via the Crow Hall and Second Floor Storeroom/Waiting Room. The bazooka is located on the desk (next to the Typewriter and Computer). Note: On the Second Floor (2F) Main Hall Concourse the Unicorn Medal can be found at one end.

The second order of business is to find the Valve Crank, which is found in the East Office on the First Floor (1F). Access this area by returning to the Second Floor via the ladder and down the outside stairwell located on the far East side. From there, use the Valve Crank and get ready for a huge surprise when returning. When you confront this new foe, RUN!

Proceed by getting the Blue Key Card in the room that can be accessed by putting out the fire.

From here, most of it is very familiar, but there are some notable areas and events.

Claire does not collect Chess Plugs, but rather Colored Stones that are found in nearly every location where Leon found the Plugs.

Claire has access to an additional area of the RPD. The broken door located next to the crashed helicopter can be opened using the Plastique Explosives and Detonator found after locating the Diamond Precinct Key (purple). The Detonator is found in the West Office on the RPD First Floor (1F). The Plastique is found in the small room adjoining it. Combine the two and use it on the door. In this area is the office of Brian Irons. A panel will open behind his desk to reveal the spot to place the Colored Blocks.

In the RPD Basement (B1), Claire does not gain access to the Sewage Plant via the Garage. She must go down a Manhole that is found to the far East of the Basement (beyond the Autopsy Room).

In the Umbrella Lab, Claire will start in a different place. First, find the power switch for the Elevator.

After Claire has escaped the Umbrella Lab, the scene will change to the Transport Area. Find the Platform Key in the back of the Train. Proceed through gate, over catwalk, and look for the Electric Panel. Get two Fuses and head through white door. Place the Fuses and fight the Last Boss (see Strategy below).

The final conflict is almost identical to the first version of Resident Evil. Evade the charging beast as long as possible. A mysterious figure will throw you the Rocket Launcher. Equip it. One shot will do the trick. Escape to the Train.

Is this the end?

STRATEGY EXTRA

The Special Key

Finding the Special Key is fairly easy. Just get to the RPD without picking up any items. Brad from the STARS Team is now a Zombie and will appear in the tunnel under the RPD entrance. First go inside the RPD and grab the Hand Gun Bullets from the central desk. Return outside and take 'im down. Search his corpse to find it.

The Special Key is used on the locker in the Storeroom/Darkroom. For Leon, it will give him access to two changes of clothes. For Claire, the Special Key will give her a new Western costume complete with authentic Six-Shooter.
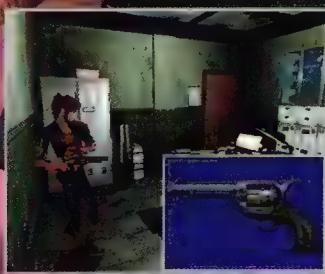
Secret Weapons

Like the first game, Resident Evil 2 will reward players with various items when the game is completed in a certain amount of time. However, unlike the first game, the amount of saves and other events such as use of weapons, will factor into a grading system.

The Rocket Launcher with unlimited ammo will show up in the Item Boxes after defeating the First Scenario in three hours or less. The Gatling Gun and Submachine Gun will show up if the feat is repeated in the Second Scenario.

Duke Nukem 64 – Nintendo 64

Enter all of these codes at the Title Screen (with Options).

Cheat Menu – Left, Left, Left Button, Left Button, Right, Right, Left, Left

Invincibility – Press the **Right** Button seven times then hit **Left**

No Monsters – Left Button, Left C, Left, Right Button, Right C, Right, Left, Left, Right

Unlock All Items – Right Button, Right C, Right, Left Button, Left C, Left, Right C, Right

Unlimited Jet Fuel – While flying with the Jet Pack enable the All Items code.

Larger Duke – Start a Co-Op or Deathmatch game. Then, enable the All Items code and turn on the Friendly Fire option. Now, have player 1 shoot another player with the Expander weapon. Enable the Invincibility code before the player explodes, then turn off the invincibility code.

Smaller Duke – Follow the same procedure for Larger Duke, but instead of using the Expander weapon use the Shrinking Ray.

"The Rhino"
Toledo, OH

Resident Evil – Saturn

Battle Game – The way this code works is strange, but if you follow the directions you should have no problem getting it to go through. First, start a new game and save at any point. Now, reset the game and at the Title Screen simultaneously press and hold **X**, **Y**, and **Z** on controller 2. With these held press **Start** on controller 2. Finally, press **Start** on controller 1. Battle Game should be a new option waiting for you.

"The Rhino"
Toledo, OH

Star Wars: Masters of Teras Kasi – PlayStation

Big Head Mode – Hold **Select** while choosing a character. Release **Select** when the match begins.

Clean Screen – Hold **L1**, **R2**, and **Select** while the match loads. Release this combo when the match begins.

Unlock Mara Jade – Highlight Team mode (set on the Jedi difficulty) and hold **L1**, **L2**, and **R1** when you enter this menu. The computer will automatically pre-select both teams, and the message "Battle for Mara Jade" will flash onto the screen. Win this battle and Mara is yours.

Super Deformed Characters – While the match is loading hold **Select**, **Up**, and **✖**. Release this combo when the match starts.

Tiny Mode – While the match is loading hold **Select**, **Up**, **✖**, and **R2**. Release this combo when the match begins.

Sab Bach
Rockville, ND

AeroFighters Assault – Nintendo 64

Unlock F-15 and Mao-Mao – When "Press Start" appears hit **Left C**, **Down C**, **Right C**, **Up C**, **Left C**, **Right C**, **Down C**.

Unlock Spanky – Finish all of the bonus missions to unlock Spanky.

Unlock Enemy Planes (Deathmatch Mode only) – In the Main Game beat the first two stages to unlock the Mig 25 and Mig 31. Beat the third and fourth stages to unlock the F-22 and KFR C2, and beat the game to unlock the EFA and RAFALE.

New Plane Colors – At the Plane Select screen (Main Game, Practice or Boss Modes only) press the **Right Button**. For the Deathmatch mode hold the **Right Button** on the default planes.

Paul Willis
Park Creek City, MI

Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey '98 – Nintendo 64

Alter Player Design – At the Options screen press **Down C** and the **Right Button, Left C** and the **Right Button,** or **Up C** and the **Right Button** to bring up the configure digits. Pressing **Down C** and the **Right Button** alters the head size. **Left C** and the **Right Button** alters the body size, and **Up C** and the **Right Button** alters the player height. Here's a list of some of the alterations we found amusing.

Stocky Players – 100000
Stocky Players With Big Heads – 010000
Stocky Players With Small Heads – 001000
Chunky Players and Small Announcer – 000001
Chunky Players With Large Heads and Small Announcer – 010101
Small Players and Small Announcer – 000100
Large Players and Large Announcer – 000010
Large Players With Large Heads and Large Announcer – 010001
Large Players With Small Heads and Large Announcer – 010010
Long Players and Large Announcer – 110110

"Bongo, The Flatulent Gaming Guru"
Washington DC

Bomberman 64 – Nintendo 64

Unlock Bonus Arenas – After beating a World in Adventure Mode a new battle arena will appear. Beat all of the Worlds to unlock all of the arenas.

Sound Test – To unlock this somewhat worthless test beat the Adventure Mode under the Normal difficulty.

Jar Jar
Knotz, MA

Cool Boarders 2 – PlayStation

New Uniforms – At the Main Menu press **Down, R1, Up, R1, Down, R2, Up, R2, Up, Up, R1, Down, Down, R2**. If this is entered correctly the announcer will scream "Here We Go!" after each movement is entered. Now, enter the menu and hit **R1** and **R2** to unlock the new uniforms.

Unlock the Alien, Boss, and Snowman – There is no easy code for this. To get the Snowman and Boss you must get golds on every track in the Free Ride Mode. For the Alien you must complete Master Mode.

Special Boards – Breaking records in Free Ride unlocks different boards.

"Frosty the Snowboarder"
Redmond, WA

Sonic R – Saturn

Hidden Characters – Collect all five Tokens and finish in first to take on the new characters listed below.

Resort Island – Mecha Sonic
Radical City – Mecha Tails
Reactive Factory – Mecha Knuckles
Regal Ruin – Egg Robo

Unlock Hidden Track – Place first on the first four courses to unlock Radiant Emerald.

Play as Dr. Robotnik – Place first on Radiant Emerald to unlock this bad boy.

Play as Super Sonic – Find the Chaos Emerald on each level. Hint: All of them are locked in the Ring Doors.

Clean Screen – While in gameplay, pause, and press **X**, **Y**, and **Z** simultaneously.

Mess With the Title – At the Title Screen use the directional pad and the unused buttons to manipulate the logo and colors.

Zoom – On most of the screens, if you push the **Left Button**, you will zoom in on whatever you are looking at (i.e. characters, etc.)

"The Un-Cola Drinker"
Webville, COM

GameShark
VIDEO GAME ENHANCER

ATTENTION!
Codes only work with InterAct's GameShark enhancer attachment.

Jet Moto 2 – PlayStation
Infinite Turbos (Blade) –
8016dcbe 0006
Infinite Turbos (Bomber) –
80174896 0006
Infinite Turbos (Gadget) –
80171a5e 0006
Infinite Turbos (The Hun) –
8017392e 0006
Infinite Turbos (Li'l Dave) –
8016bdee 0006
Infinite Turbos (The Max) –
8016fb8e 0006
Infinite Turbos (Steele) –
801729c6 0006
Infinite Turbos (Technician) –
8016ec26 0006
Infinite Turbos (Vampeera) –
80170af6 0006
Infinite Turbos (Wild Ride) –
8016cd56 0006
Start With All Tracks, Main Trophy, and Insane Difficulty Level
Unlocked –**8016af06 0401**
8016b0f0 0401
8016b0f2 0401
8016b0f4 0401
8016b0f6 0401
Start With All Code Medals, Original Tracks and Stunt Key –
8016b0ee 0401
8016b0fa 0101
8016b0fc 0101
8016b0fe 0101
8016b100 0101
8016b102 0101

Monster Rancher – PlayStation
Infinite Cash – **800e8540 ffff**
Infinite Energy – **800dde72 03e7**
Slow Motion – **800ad950 2603**
Infinite Battle Time –
800eb2e8 06fd
Enemies Have No Will Power –
800dde98 0000
Infinite Dig Time – **80195d5e 0089**
Monster Won't Age –
800b88c0 0000
Master Breeder – **800e8544 000a**
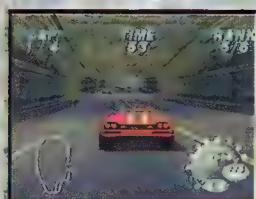
Automobili Lamborghini – Nintendo 64
Infinite Time – **800ce76f 0063**

PaRappa the Rapper – PlayStation
Rappin' Modifier –
801c368e 000?
Score 999 Points –
801c3670 03e7
Insert these numbers for the "?" in the Rappin' Modifier
0-Cool
1-Good
2-Bad
3-Awful

Tomb Raider 2 – PlayStation
Start With All Dragons –
800de682 000f
All Items – **80088b34 0009**
Infinite Med Packs –
80088ab8 03e7
Infinite Oxygen – **8008c4fe 0708**
Infinite Flares – **80088aaa 03e7**
Infinite Automatic Pistols Ammo –
8008c5ac 0028
Infinite Grenade Launcher Ammo
– **8008c5bc 0008**
Infinite Harpoon Ammo –
8008c5b8 0006
Infinite Shotgun Ammo –
8008c5b4 0012
Infinite M-16 Ammo –
8008c5c0 0050

Command & Conquer: Red Alert – PlayStation
Infinite Funds – **8002cd40 ffff**
Infinite Power – **8002cd5c ffff**

Bomberman 64
Infinite Gems – **802ac62f 0063**
Infinite Credits – **802ac62b 0009**
Infinite Lives – **802ac627 0063**
Infinite Time – **802ac643 0000**

Wheel of Fortune
Infinite Free Spins –
800b999b 0001

WCW Vs. the NWO: World Tour – N64
Have 6 Hidden Characters –
80060665 00ff
Always Max Spirit P1 –
800f0801 0064
Always Normal Spirit P1 –
800f0801 0032
Always No Spirit P1 –
800f0801 0000

Cool Boarders 2 – PlayStation
Always Place 1st & Infinite Checkpoint Time –
8009103c 0000
80130994 0001
Have 50.0 in Half-Pipe & Open Alien Boarder Gray (Run straight down the half-pipe to score 50 and unlock the Alien) –
8009a868 5555
8009a87c 5555
8009a882 5555
8009a880 5555

Critical Depth – PlayStation
Infinite Health – **801dF15e 007c**
Start With All Weapons and Infinite Ammo – **801df5d0 6363**
801df5d2 6363
801df5d4 6363
801df5d6 6363
801df5ce 0632
Infinite Shields – **801df5b0 03e8**

Pandemonium 2 – PlayStation
Infinite Energy – **800abd76 0004**
Invincibility – **800ea79a 0200**
Infinite Lives – **800abd74 0403**

Frogger – PlayStation
Infinite Lives – **800b6c50 0003**
Infinite Time – **800b3d78 021b**

Test Drive 4 – PlayStation
Infinite Time – **80079956 783b**
Always Finish in First –
80079972 0001

NBA Live '98 – PlayStation

To enter these codes you must enter your name (User Record) as Secrets (case sensitive) at the Controller Set-Up screen. After doing this a new option will open up at the bottom of the screen. Hit ● to enter this menu.

Freaky Uniforms – Freaky
Cloaked Players – Cloak home (for Visitors) Cloak away
Translucent Players – Lizard (for Visitors) Reptile
Eye Patches – Eyepatch (Opens Up at Created Player Menu)
Monocles – Monocle (Opens Up at Created Player Menu)
EA Created Players – Toque
Teddy Players – Pin rocks (Answer the question with "He's both". The new uniforms will appear in the Freaky Uniforms code.)

Hidden Teams
Go to the Rosters screen and enter the Create Custom Team menu. Now, enter the location and team name to unlock one of these strange new NBA additions.

Team EA – EA – Europals
EA Coders – Hitmen – Coders
Strange Team 1 – Hitmen – Earplugs
Strange Team 2 – Hitmen – Idlers
Strange Team 3 – Hitmen – Pixels
Strange Team 4 – TNT – Blasters
Q&A Team – QA – Campers
Tester Team – QA – Testtubes

Latrell Sprewell
San Francisco, CA

Ghost in the Shell – PlayStation

Bonus Picture – Beat the game without continuing to unlock a bonus picture after the credits run.
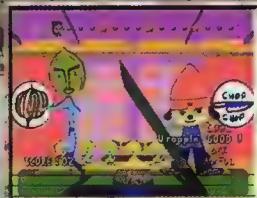*Matt Murdock*
Marvel, FL

Mortal Kombat Mythologies: Sub-Zero – Nintendo 64

Enter all of these codes at the Password screen.
Start With 1000 Lives – GTTBHR
Max Urns – NXCVSR
Start at the Fortress Level – ZCHRRY
View Credits – GRVDTS
Justin Monast
Sarasota, CA

Parappa the Rapper – PlayStation

Extended Ending – Finish every level with a Cool rating to unlock a new ending with Sunny and Katy. Use the directional pad to change views, L1 and R1 to zoom, and ✖ and ▲ to change costumes.
"The VidMan"
Uptown, MN

Test Drive 4 – PlayStation

Enter these codes at the High Score screen.
Unlock Bonus Cars – SAUSAGE
Unlock Reversed Tracks – KNACKED
"Virtua Gap Boy '98"
Phoenix, AZ

WCW vs. NWO: World Tour – Nintendo 64

New Uniforms – At the Character Select screen press Left C or Right C to change uniforms.

Unlock Hidden Characters – For each League beat in League Challenge you will unlock a new character (Diamond Dallas Page, Glacier, Wrath, Black Widow, Macho Man Randy Savage, and Joe Bruiser). If you beat all of the Leagues you will unlock these characters and a new League. Beat this League for an additional character.

Use Foreign Objects – With any character, leave the ring and walk over to the crowd to get an item. Characters who are more popular will get items more often (i.e. Hulk Hogan, Sting).
"Virtua Gap Boy '98"
Phoenix, AZ

Mace: The Dark Age – Nintendo 64

Fight as Janitor Ned – At the Character Select screen place your cursor on the following list of characters and press Start on each: Koyasha, Executioner, Lord Deimos, Xiao Long. Now, choose any fighter and press A.

Two-Player Practice – Highlight Practice Mode and hit Start on both controllers simultaneously.

New Heads – At the Character Select screen place your cursor on the following list of characters and press Start on each: Al Rashid, Takeshi, Mordos Kull, Xiao Long, Namira. Now, choose a fighter and press A.
Calvin Yetting
Medina, ND

Command & Conquer: Red Alert – PlayStation

Enter these level codes on the Soviet disc at the Password screen.
Level 2 – VMBWOQ284
Level 3 – XN37MCCSO
Level 4 – LH06FZZQL
Level 5 – BUVV20LFF
Level 6 – AVYQ10YA8
Level 7 – LZRJTMQAN
Level 8 – YQX4C9GFH
Level 9 – 1QESO8LE0
Level 10 – RKP0UOXJA
Level 11 – CDLKYL7Q4
Level 12 – 8T5GGDK25
Level 13 – X5CDE0KN8

Random Codes
The following codes require that a default controller configuration be used. Also, click on the team buttons of the tool bar with ●, then input the code you desire.
Instant Win – ✖, ✖, ■, ■, ●, ▲, ●
Nuclear Attack – ●, ✖, ●, ▲, ■, ▲
Mo Money – ■, ■, ●, ✖, ▲, ●
Soylent Green Mode – ✖, ●, ▲, ▲, ●, ✖ (only available in multiplayer)
Namoi Hinders
Janus, NM

Robotron 64 – Nintendo 64

Enter these codes during gameplay.
Two Way Fire – Up, Up C, Up, Up C
Three Way Fire – Right, Right, Left C, Down C
Four Way Fire – Down, Down, Up, Right C
Shield – Down, Left, Left C, Right C
Flame Thrower – Down, Right, Down, Right, Right C
Speed-Up – Left, Left, Right, Right, Up C
Radiation Spray – Up, Down, Right C, Left C

Random Cheats
Try these during gameplay.
Strange Fire Technique – Wiggling the controller causes hidden items to appear.
Kill a Hulk – After rescuing a human, one of the Hulks can be killed.
More Points for Humans – Collect the humans in this order: Mom, Dad, Mikey for more points.

Big Codes
Enter these codes at the Setup screen.
Start With 50 Lives – Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left C, Right C, Left C, Right C
Level Select – Down, Up, Left C, Down, Left C, Right C, Down, Right C
Game Boy Mode – Up, Down, Right, Left C, Down, Up, Left, Right C, Up, Down
Auto Play – Left, Right, Up, Down, Left C, Right C, Left C, Right C (repeat this entire sequence two more times)
"McNamara Make 2.71"
"LOL"

Carnage Heart – PlayStation

Manual Control – During combat press Select twelve times then choose Manual when the user prompt appears.
"The Rhino"
Toledo, OH

Shipwreckers – PlayStation

Enter these level codes at the Password screen.

Level 1-2 – Ship, Skull, Fish, Anchor, Ship, Anchor
Level 1-3 – Ship, Anchor, Skull, Ship, Anchor, Fish
Level 1-4 – Skull, Ship, Fish, Anchor, Anchor, Ship
Level 2-1 – Fish, Fish, Anchor, Ship, Skull, Anchor
Level 2-2 – Skull, Anchor, Anchor, Fish, Anchor, Ship
Level 2-3 – Fish, Anchor, Ship, Ship, Ship, Skull
Level 2-4 – Anchor, Fish, Ship, Skull, Skull, Fish
Level 3-1 – Ship, Skull, Skull, Fish, Anchor, Skull
Level 3-2 – Fish, Skull, Anchor, Fish, Skull, Fish
Level 3-3 – Fish, Fish, Ship, Skull, Fish, Ship
Level 3-4 – Ship, Anchor, Ship, Fish, Anchor, Fish
Level 4-1 – Skull, Skull, Anchor, Ship, Fish, Fish
Level 4-2 – Ship, Anchor, Skull, Fish, Fish, Anchor
Level 4-3 – Skull, Ship, Skull, Skull, Fish, Ship
Level 4-4 – Ship, Fish, Ship, Fish, Ship, Anchor
Level 5-1 – Anchor, Ship, Fish, Skull, Fish, Ship
Level 5-2 – Fish, Ship, Anchor, Skull, Ship, Fish
Level 5-3 – Ship, Fish, Skull, Anchor, Anchor, Skull
Level 5-4 – Skull, Ship, Anchor, Fish, Ship, Skull

Kelly Sheldon
Rockford, IL

Courier Crisis – PlayStation

Enter these codes at the Password screen.

Race as an Alien – XFIFTYONEX
Race as a Gorilla – SAVAGEAPES

Louie Harlington
Baltimore, MD

Tomb Raider 2 – PlayStation

All of these codes must be entered during gameplay.

Unlock Level Skip – Find a large flat surface and follow these directions. You'll need to use the Walk Button for most of these actions.
1) Sidestep left
2) Sidestep right
3) Sidestep left
4) Step back
5) Step forward
6) Turn around three times (don't hold Walk)
8) Jump forward and press ● while you are in the air

Unlock All Weapons – It's easy, follow these steps.
1) Sidestep left
2) Sidestep right
3) Sidestep left
4) Step back
5) Step forward
6) Turn around three times (Don't hold Walk)
7) Jump backward and press ● while in the air

Blow Her Up – Once again follow these directions.
1) Sidestep left
2) Sidestep right
3) Sidestep left
4) Step forward
5) Step back
6) Turn around three times (Don't hold Walk)
7) Jump forward and press ● while in the air

Freeze the Butler – In the Training Level (Lara's home), enter the kitchen and open up the freezer door. Walk inside and the butler will follow. Now, quickly run out, and close the door. He won't bother you again.

Justin Moomjian
Oyser Bay, NY

Excalibur 2555 AD – PlayStation

Enter these codes while the game is paused.

Refill Health – ▲, ▲, ▲, ■, ■, ■, ■, ■
Max Weapon Power – ▲, ▲, ■, ■, ●, ●, ■, ■
Level Skip – ■, ●, ■, ▲, ●, ▲, ▲, ▲

"Wizard of the Game Domain"
Webville, COM

Moto Racer – PlayStation

Enter all of these codes at the Title Screen.

View Credits – ●, ▲, ●, ●, ▲, ●, Up, Right, Left, ✖
View Ending – ●, ▲, ●, ▲, ●, ▲, L1, Up, R2, ✖
Unlock All Ten Tracks – Up, Up, Left, Right, Down, Down, ●, R2, ▲, ✖
Unlock Reverse Tracks – Down, Down, Right, Left, Up, Up, ●, L2, ▲, ✖
Unlock Reverse Mode – Left, Right, Left, Right, ●, ● R1, L1, ●, ✖
Slow Opponents – Down, Down, Down, ●, L1, ●, L2, Down, Down, ✖
Tiny Bikes – Up, Down, R2, L2, Down, Up, L1, ✖
Turbo Boost Bikes – Up, Up, Up, ▲, R1, ▲, R2, Up, Up, ✖
Night Tracks – Up, ●, L1, Down, ▲, L2, ●, Left, R1, ✖

Tino Torintinoi
Houston, TX

Frogger – PlayStation

Pause the game and enter the code you desire.

Unlimited Lives – Right, ■, ▲, ■, ▲, ✖
Level select – Right, ■, ▲, ■, ▲, R1, L1, R1, L1, ●

Samuel L. Jackson
Oakland, CA

Colony Wars – PlayStation

Enter all of these codes at the Password screen.

Unlimited Secondary Weapon – Memo*X33RTY
Unlimited Shields – Hestas*Retort
Level Select – Commander*Jeffer
Unlimited Primary Weapon – Tranquillex
Turn Off Cheats – All*cheats*off

"The Rhino"
Toledo, OH

Michael Jackson's Moonwalker – Genesis
Level Select – Hold **Up**, **Left**, **A** on controller 2 while turning on the game. With these buttons held press **Start** on Controller 2. Now, push **Start** on Controller 1 and select a one-player game. You should see the words, "Round 1." Press **Left** or **Right** to select the levels and push Start.

Micro Machines – Genesis
Just pause the game at anytime and enter any or all of these codes.
Turbo Speed – **Up**, **Down**, **A**, **B**, **Left**, **Right**, **C**
Infinite Lives – **B**, **Down**, **C**, **Down**, **Up**, **Down**, **Left**, **Down**
Improved Handling – **A**, **Up**, **B**, **Down**, **C**, **Left**, **Start**, **Right**
Improved Crash Power – **C**, **Up**, **Left**, **Right**, **A**, **B**, **A**, **C**

Super Mario Kart – Super Nintendo
Midget Mobile – To make any car a "midget mobile" simply go to the character select screen and hold **Y** and press **A** over the character you desire. The character will magically shrink before your eyes like butter melting in a pan. This code does not work in Battle or Time Trail Mode.

classic codes

Toy Story – Super Nintendo
Invincibility – In level one walk over to the dresser with the army barrel on top and jump onto the first open drawer. From this point, press and hold **Down**. Once your star starts flashing and spinning you'll be invincible for the rest of the game.

Wolverine: Adamantium Rage – Super Nintendo
Enter these codes at the Password screen.
Level 2 –
Psylocke/Cyclops/Storm/Iceman
Level 3 –
Professor X/Colossus/Psylocke/ Psylocke
Level 4 –
Bishop/Bishop/Colossus/Storm
Level 5 –
Iceman/Cyclops/Psylocke/Colossus
Level 6 –
Colossus/Professor X/Psylocke/ Iceman
Level 7 –
Professor X/Storm/Iceman/Psylocke
Level 8 –
Nightcrawler/Colossus/Storm/ Psylocke

Level 9 –
Colossus/Nightcrawler/Cyclops/Storm
Level 10 –
Storm/Colossus/Bishop/Professor X
Level 11 –
Nightcrawler/ProfessorX/Cyclops/ Colossus

Gargoyle's Quest – Game Boy
Enter these codes at the Password screen.
Level 2 – **MUPP**
Level 3 – **JMHW**
Level 4 – **BIF8**
Level 5 – **BRAZ**
Level 6 – **HWTL**
Level 7 – **90AZ**
Level 8 – **GJ7Q**
Level 9 – **KLVO**
Level 10 – **FWGG**
Level 11 – **G7CY**
Level 12 – **N5AQ**
Level 13 – **9RZF**
Level 14 – **SWXE**
Level 15 – **CBFJ**

Nemesis – Game Boy
Full Weapons and Shields – Pause your game and press **Up**, **Up**, **Down**, **Down**, **Left**, **Right**, **Left**, **Right**, **B**, **A**, **Start**. Otherwise known as the Konami code.

Donkey Kong Land 2 – Game Boy
All Kremkoins – Select any file at the beginning of the game and hold either **Left** or **Right**. Then, quickly press **A**, **B** repeatedly until you hear a tone.

Bugs Bunny's Crazy Castle 2 – Game Boy
Enter these codes at the Password screen.
Level 5 – **RACE**
Level 6 – **WORD**
Level 7 – **SHOP**
Level 8 – **SIZE**
Level 9 – **QUIZ**
Level 10 – **DOLL**
Level 11 – **DATE**
Level 12 – **ZOOM**
Level 13 – **DISK**
Level 14 – **MOLD**
Level 15 – **ZERO**
Level 16 – **FIRE**
Level 17 – **ROOT**
Level 18 – **READ**
Level 19 – **TAPE**
Level 20 – **UNIT**
Level 21 – **SONG**
Level 22 – **TYRE**
Level 23 – **LOVE**
Level 24 – **NOTE**

Stunt Race FX

SNES

Availability: Common
Replay Value: Moderately-High
Similar Games: Super Mario Kart (SN), Virtua Racing (SG)
Created by: Nintendo
Access Tip: To access an alternate racing view, begin a game then press Start to pause the game. Press Select, L, R, L, R, L, R, L, R and unpause the game for the new perspective.
Overall: 8.75

Originally released in 1994, Stunt Race FX was the second SNES game that utilized Nintendo 's Super FX chip technology (the first being Star Fox). With the guidance of legendary Nintendo creator, Shigeru Miyamoto, this game has plenty to offer the racing fan. A total of five vehicles can be raced on over 20 courses. The meat of the game consists of the Speed Trax where the player races a four course circuit in either Novice, Expert, or Master modes. If speed is not your thing, try the Stunt Trax. These four courses are filled with obstacles, banked turns, and huge jumps. Like the Silver Coin Challenge of today's Diddy Kong Racing, this game's Stunt Trax required the player to collect 40 stars per course to succeed. There are the two-player Battle Trax, Bonus Rounds where you drive a semi, and many other options that make this game one of the most entertaining racers released for the SNES.

Karateka

apple II

Availability: Rare
Replay Value: Low
Similar Games: Double Dragon (NES), Kung Fu (NES)
Created by: Jordan Mechner for Broderbund
Access Tip: Do not run in close proximity to enemies as one blow will end your game. Bow to the princess at the end of the game.
Overall: 9

Broderbund, publishers of other classics such as Lode Runner and Choplifter, brought this game to the Apple II in 1984 (subsequent versions followed on other Platforms such as the Amiga and Commodore 64). Created by Jordan Mechner, Karateka is considered to be the forefather of today's fighting games as it incorporated a number of joystick and button combinations to execute moves. The game is basically a quest to save an imprisoned princess. The player starts on the edge of a feudal palace grounds and attempts to infiltrate the confines by fighting one guard after the other. Karateka is a very challenging game as there is only one chance to succeed. Fail and the game starts over at the beginning. Gaming in the early 1980s was not complete without battling it out in Karateka.